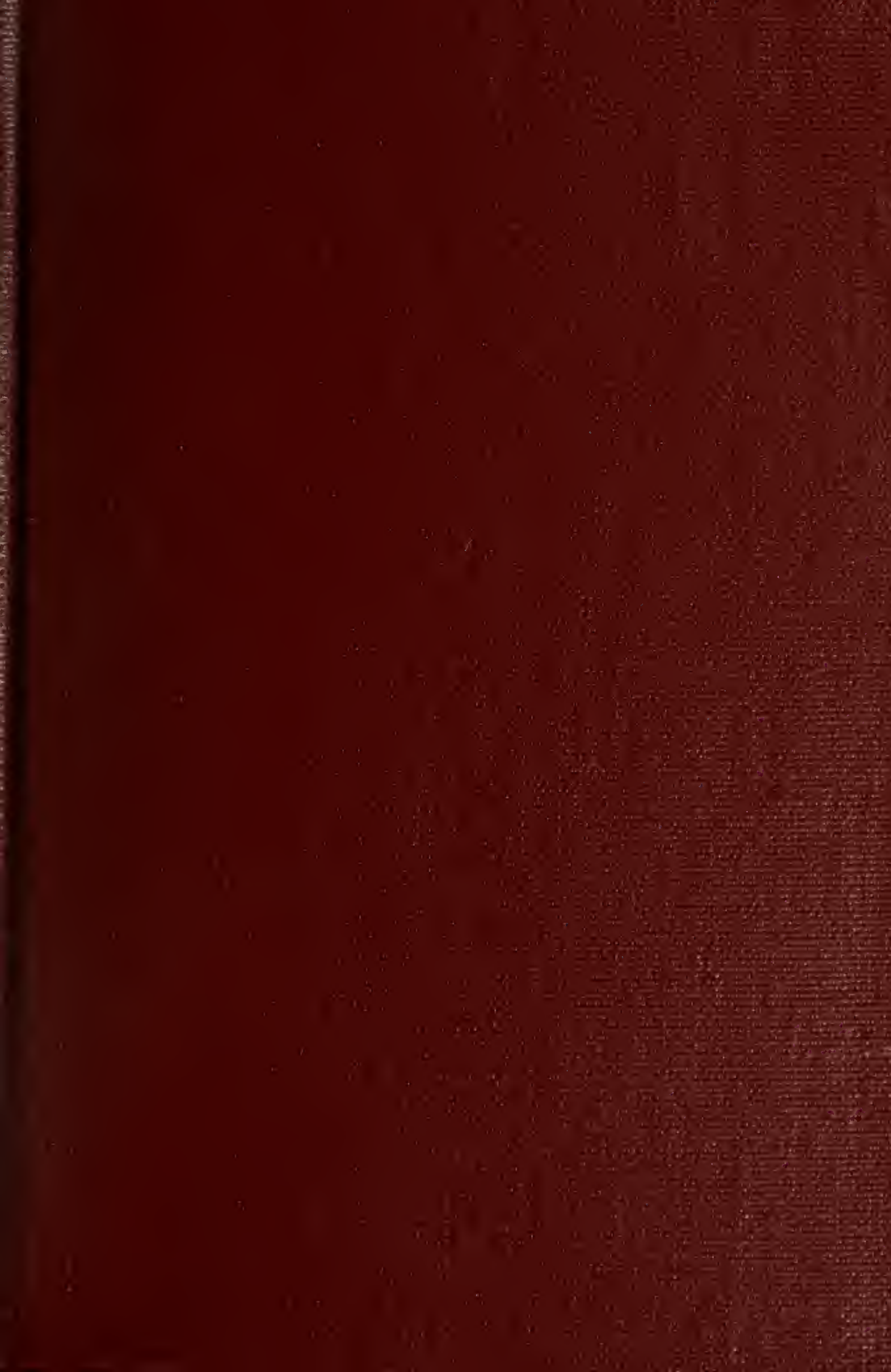

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Scotch Readings.

SCOTCH READINGS

Humorous and Amusing

BY

ALEXANDER G. MURDOCH

Author of "Recent and Living Scottish Poets."

"A hearty laugh is the sauce of life."

FOURTH EDITION

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PREFACE.

Of late years a somewhat new sort of literature has sprung up in our midst, which has taken considerable hold upon the estimation of the masses. The compositions here referred to may not, in the opinion of cultured litterateurs, be regarded as of a high order of merit, nor, indeed, of any great degree of interest. Nevertheless, there cannot be a doubt as to the feeling which is evinced by the people at large relative to the matter.

To define exactly this new species of book-writing would not be easy; but the term by which it may be most familiarly recognised is *Readings*. The meaning of the term must be pretty generally understood,—by all, we should imagine, but the very learned. That this new departure is a good one and increasing in popularity is everywhere evident. All that gives really innocent amusement, and brings man into contact with those kindly influences which broaden his sympathy with his fellows, is surely to be commended. It is freely admitted that *Readings*, to an eminent degree, occupy such a sphere of usefulness.

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Compositions of the kind, in order to fulfil the ends that are really desired, whether they be for the platform, or intended for the more humble gathering at the social fireside, must necessarily abound in humour and character, otherwise they fail of their purpose.

The author of the present work has already issued several small contributions in this department of literature The kind appreciation with which these have been received by his fellow-countrymen, has encouraged him to issue a new series, and on a somewhat larger scale.

As will be manifest to the reader, the author has confined himself to depicting character and incident as found among his countrymen, than which, as he believes, no richer or more entertaining subject can be found. Some of the life-scenes and phases of character portrayed in these pages, may not be quite such as many readers have been accustomed to come in contact with. Notwithstanding this, they are all in accordance with actual Scotch life among the working classes, as taking place in the occurrences of every day.

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SCOTCH READINGS.

FIRST SERIES.

MRS. MACFARLAN'S RABBIT-DINNER.

JOHNNY MACFARLAN was a shaemaker's mechanic. He ca'd in the tackets in the heels of the buits and shune, and was considered a crack hand at the job. Plenty of ordinary workmen might be able to do the plain work —that is, ca'in' the tackets in the soles—but Johnny had a geometrical genius for curves, and, with his "specks" on, could walk roun' the edges o' the heels like an experienced Corporation scavenger sweepin' the circle o' a lamp-post.

Personally, Johnny was a wee man, but possessed—by way of effective contrast—a big wife, and an extra big sma' family. Johnny's weight corresponded with his size; he weighed seven stane in his stockin's — before breakfast. What additional weight he might have "scaled" after breakfast, consequent on the absorption o' a basin o' weel-biled parritch, an' a big floury baker's scone, wash't doon wi' a chappin o' sour milk, is a question touching atmospheric displacement in the stomach, which it would be kittle to guess at.

Regarding Mrs. Macfarlan, or Betty, as Johnny commonly styled her, she was the physical opposite of her "man" Johnny, and in point of bodily weight, was a perfect whistler.

Betty, in view of her size, ruled the domestic roast, of course; but Johnny seldom fell into her angry hands—he was sae plaguey wee and ill to catch. Even at the worst, their domestic rows were never very serious, and ended generally by Johnny sensibly capitulating to his angry spouse, and then gallantly sclimbin' up on a chair to tak' her twa rosy cheeks atween his hands and fondly kiss her.

Now, Johnny Macfarlan, although a good man in many ways, was, I fear, not a particularly religious man. Some said Johnny was at heart a Socialist, and believed very much in the good time coming, when nations all over the earth would fraternise and live at peace—when happy working men would put five-pound notes between their breakfast rolls instead of corn'd meat—when colliers would be let down pit-shafts by silver ropes, and so forth.

Anyhow, Johnny was the reverse of orthodox in his "views," and delighted in joking about Christianity and its exported adjuncts—hot rum and cold missionary. Johnny, it is true, had a "sate in the kirk," but the said "sate" was too often conspicuous by the owner's absence. His wife, Betty, however, was there every Sunday afternoon, and as she had a keen memory for passages in the sermon applicable to Johnny's "lost state," she made up for her husband's absence frae the kirk by flingin' lumps o' the sermon at his heid at the Sunday dinner-table, which annoying artillery practice Johnny humorously checkmated by shoving into her plate the toughest bits o' girsle he could pick oot o' the dinner stew, so as to effectively "jab up" her clackin' tongue.

But Johnny, altho' no a kirk-gaun man, was a capital hand at cooking a guid Sunday dinner. He could toast the breid to a fair hair, cut the ingans, minsh the "shooet" (suet), and saut and pepper the "stew" to perfection. Then, as for "maskin' the tea," there wasna a man nor an auld wife in Gleska could bate Johnny Macfarlan at that.

Weel, to come to the story of the grand rabbit-dinner; Maggie, their auldest bit lassie, had been "oot at service" for some short time, and having got her first three months' wages, was at hame frae Saturday nicht to Monday morning; and as the bit lassie had brocht hame some bawbees wi' her, the fond parents resolved on having a grand rabbit-dinner on Sunday. The proposition, which was made by Betty, was all the more readily assented to on account of Wee Mosey, their fifth auldest laddie, having had for some time a young rabbit in the cellar, and which had become awkwardly "in the road" on account of its removal to the house, consequent on a cairt o' coals having been put into the said cellar. The rabbit was therefore doomed, and its martyrdom was readily agreed to by all except Wee Mosey, who, unfortunately for the tragic sequel, had no voice—other than an appropriately small voice—in the matter.

"An' hoo will ye manage to cook it, Johnny?" inquired Mrs. Macfarlan, on the preceding Saturday nicht. "Ye ken it's an extra dish, an' ye hav'na had muckle experience that way, I'm certain."

"Never ye mind hoo I'll cook it,' promptly replied Johnny. "I'll cook it, Betty, an' that's enough."

"But, Johnny——"

"No a word, Betty, if you please—no a single word. I'll cook the precious thing, dinna ye doot. Jist ye leave oot an ingan, a spunefu' o' floor, an' a pair o shears. As for the rabbit, I ken whaur to get her," and Johnny yerked his head in the direction of the bed-pawn, signifying that the innocent subject of the sacrificial dinner was probably at that very moment sleeping under the kitchen bed, blissfully unconscious of the culinary fate awaiting it on the morrow.

And now let us conceive Sunday morning as having arrived. Betty has gotten herself, and some six or eight of

the auldest of the bairns ready for the kirk, and is now tormenting Johnny with her final instructions—the proper disposal of the rabbit, as was natural, coming largely to the front.

"Noo, Johnny dear," she said, "I've tell'd ye a' that's necessary for the richt bilin' o' the rabbit——"

"An' a great deal mair," interrupted Johnny, with a touch of sarcasm in his voice. "Pey ye attention to auld Mr. Orthodoxy's sermon, Betty; an' I'll pey attention to the richt bilin' o' the rabbit."

An' now that Betty was gone, it was the dinner Johnny had to do with; but the first principle of it—the rabbit—was curiously amissing. Everything, in fact, was waiting on the rabbit. There was the spunefu' o' floor, the ingan, the pepper and saut, alang wi' the knife an' the shears for the skinnin' o't. Besides all that, there was a glorious fire burning—in fact, a rale special fire, which visibly endangered the safety o' the "lum;" the pat was also sittin' ready, an' so also was the tureen to "dish't" in. But the Hamlet of the play, the rabbit, was conspicuously amissing!

Ay, where was that blessed rabbit hiding itself? Apparently scenting murder in the air, it had for the last two hours been strangely absent from even accidental sight.

"Clearly," thought Johnny, "it's time I was setting to work. The kirk's barely in twa hours a'thegither, an' the pat needs an' hour-an'-a-half's guid bilin'! I maun buckle up my sleeves, an' fa' to in richt earnest!"

This said, Johnny got on his "specks," as his sicht was a trifle fail't, and began rummagin' aboot the odd corners o' the hoose in search o' the missing rabbit. If it had only been the cat he wanted, he could have begun skinnin' operations at once, as he was fa'in' owre't every ither minute in his search for the missing rabbit. In fact so often did the poor cat come in his way that Johnny finally dealt it a smart kick, which sent it flying below the kitchen-bed like a streak of greased lightning.

No; that rabbit couldn't be got—it was simply nowhere! He looked here, he looked there; he looked high, he looked low; he looked over the bed, and he looked under it; he looked within presses, and on shelves; in drawers, under chairs, and, as a final climax, in the wean's cradle! But no; there was no trace of the missing rabbit to be found anywhere.

At his wit's end, Johnny, as a last shift, set the hale o' the remaining weans who had not been taken to the kirk by their mither to help him in the search. Their united efforts, however, completely failed to discover the missing rabbit's place of hide.

The search being thus at all points a failure, Johnny, bethinking himself for a moment, suddenly remembered that he had looked both in and under every place—except under the cradle.

The cradle was sitting before the fire; he shifted its position, and out leapt the missing rabbit, and with a nervous jump-jump-jump, was in at the back of a big kist in a second, pursued by Johnny and the hale jing-bang o' the shouting weans! Reaching doon his hand at the back o' the kist, Johnny picked up the trembling victim, and carried it into the scullery for instant "despatch," without, I fear, the least Christian, or even Socialistic compunction.

Pausing for a moment to consider what way, and at what part he would begin the work of death, the rabbit, apprehensive of danger apparently, gave a sudden wriggle, and getting freed from Johnny's grip, it scurried across the floor, and was presently hid from sight below the kitchen-bed.

Uttering an angry expletive, Johnny dashed after it, and in less than no time brought it out of quarters, and hurriedly despatched it. The rabbit fought toughly for its little life, and proved a "fell thief" to master, as Johnny afterwards

admitted. But he managed it at last, and, in the inside o' five minutes, had it skinned and thrust holus-bolus into the dinner-pot.

The fire did the rest, and it did its work well. In twenty minutes the pot was "bilin' like onything," and Johnny hoped to save his reputation as a grand Sunday cook, by having the dinner "dish't" in proper time for Betty's return frae kirk. In fact, he hoped for even more than that. His reputation would not only be sustained by the "dish" which he was now preparing, but would be very much enhanced thereby, he fondly hoped. If the cooking of the rabbit-dinner proved a success, he would, in common justice, be entitled to some extra credit. There were many, no doubt, who could cook professional rabbit-dinners, but whaur was the man (Johnny asked himself) wha could mind five or six steerin' weans, nurse a "screamer" in the cradle, and cook at the same time a rabbit-dinner, including the killin' an' the skinnin' o't? Yes, John Macfarlan proudly looked round the kitchen, and boldly asked the walls—"Where was that gifted man?" and defeated Echo promptly answered—"Nowhere!"

"It's just delicious," soliloquised Johnny, as he tasted the savoury "brae" with an unctuous smack of the lips; "in fact, it's mair than merely delicious, it's jist perfectly exquishous! Saut an' pepper to taste pits the capstane on guid cookery," added Johnny, as he withdrew the tasting spoon from his lips, and prepared to dust a fresh sprinkling of pepper atop of the savoury soup.

Five minutes more passed, and—"I'll now venture to lift it," quoth Johnny, and forthwith he whipped the pot from off the fire, and presently "dish't" the rich morsel in full view of the admiring children.

"There! an' if Betty's no pleased wi that dish I'll eat my auld bauchels. It's weel cooked, carefully sautet an' pepper'd, an' bonnily 'dish't,' an' onything mair or better

than that it couldna weel be. But, guidsake, there's Betty at the door!"

And in two seconds thereafter, the veritable Betty, with her numerous family brood around her, stood on the centre of the kitchen-floor, admiring the "dish't" rabbit, and delightfully snuffing the savoury atmosphere which everywhere filled the homely apartment.

"Weel, Johnny dear, ye've managed to cook the rabbit I see, as ye said ye wad," was Mrs. Macfarlan's first salutation: "weel dune for you, Johnny!"

"Oo, ay, lass, I've cook't its goose nicely, an' I'm hopin' it'll prove a toothsome dish for us a'."

"Weel, Johnny, if it tastes hauf as weel as it smells, the pirnickiest mooth 'll ha'e naething to fin' faut wi'."

"I'll tak' my affy-davy on the taste o't, Betty; the taste o't 'll be, if onything, upsides wi' the smell o't, for it's cook't according to Cocker, ye may depend;—a spunefu' o' floor, a moderate-sized ingan, twa pints o' water to bile't in, an' finely sautet an' pepper't to taste."

"Weel, we'll jist sit doon an' taste it, Johnny, dear," said Betty. And having now denuded herself of her Sunday "braws," she got on a working wrapper, and sat herself down to "carve" the rabbit forthwith.

"Eh, Johnny, dear, d'ye ken, that rabbit brae's jist grand," remarked Mrs. Macfarlan, as she helped herself to a spoonful of the rich gravy.

Johnny said nothing, but only sat and complacently smiled, his twa thumbs stuck in the armpits of his waistcoat, and his hands spread out delightedly, like a man neck-deep in the warmest of domestic clover.

"An' the rabbit itsel's jist quite perfeckshous, Johnny—as tender's a bit o' chicken! Oh, Johnny, ye're jist a fair love o' a man—a perfeck auld sweetie—a rale wee dear!"

Johnny ventured nothing in reply; his soul was too full to speak; he could only alternately snuff up the rich flavour

of the rabbit, and the still richer flavour of Mrs. Macfarlan's flattering incense. His two thumbs, however, gradually slid round to the top of the armpits of his waistcoat, under the rise of his swelling feelings, until the tips of his fingers were level with the crown of his head, and this characteristic position he maintained till his well-pleased better-half had put down his share of the rabbit-soup, and told him to "enrich his bluid wi't," and to mentally "thank his Maker for the toothsome mercies bestowed."

Johnny, feeling in his heart that the "cook" had already been duly thanked, did not hesitate to inwardly thank the "bestower of the mercies" agreeably to Mrs. Macfarlan's request. Thereafter the whole family circle sat down to discuss their share of the grand rabbit-dinner.

"An' what was the minister sayin' till't the day, Betty?" asked Johnny, as he warmed to his savoury dinner.

"Oh, he was jist grand, Johnny, dear," joyfully responded Mrs. Macfarlan, as she "sooked," with evident relish, one of the "hint legs" of the rabbit.

"Was he as guid's the rabbit, Betty?"

"Eh, ye sly auld sweetie; ye're tryin' to fish anither compliment frae me?"

"Weel, then, Betty, tell me what was auld Mr. Orthodoxy's subject this afternoon—effectual calling? fore-ordination? foreign missions? local Dorcas societies?——"

"Nane o' them, Johnny," interrupted Mrs. Macfarlan.

"What then, Betty?"

"The New Jerusalem."

"The New Jerusalem!—h'm."

"Ay, an' I wish we were a' safe there, Johnny."

"Will there be ony biled rabbits there, Betty?"

"I hope sae, Johnny; an' if they taste as weel's this yin, there canna be owre mony, I think."

"Ay, but, Betty, ye maun bethink yersel' a bit; a Scotch rabbit cooked owre a hamely coal-fire is a' richt enough, but

what aboot a sidereal rabbit?—wha can tell the flavour of a sidereal rabbit, born an' bred amang the rolling spheres, an' cooked maybe by a stroke o' lichtnin'! Eh, ye wisna thinkin' on that, Betty?"

"Sidereal rabbits, Johnny; what sort of animals are they?"

"Inhabitants o' the spheres, Betty, inhabitants of the rollin' spheres—star rabbits, ye ken. Ye surely dinna suppose, Betty, that ye're to be the only immortalised being up yonder! For my pairt, Betty, I wad rather stay where I am on this roun' ball, than inhabit the New Jerusalem wi' some folks I ken."

"What roun' ball d'ye refer to, Johnny?" quite innocently asked Mrs. Macfarlan, looking at the same instant under the table; "what kind o' a roun' ball are ye referrin' to?—is't a ball o' worset, or what?"

"Oh, this earth, Betty. Ye ken as weel's me that it's jist roun', an' nae ither possible shape, although ye'll no admit it."

"Noo, Johnny, I want nae mair argie-bargiement aboot the circularosity o' the earth. I had mair than enough o' that subject frae ye the nicht afore yestreen. Besides, it's no a Sunday subject to argie aboot."

"Weel, d'ye admit it's roun', then?"

"No; an' I'll never admit ony sic nonsense. D'ye think I ha'e lost my e'esicht, Johnny Macfarlan, an' my senses alang wi't? Does that flat table look roun'? G'wa' wi' ye, Johnny Macfarlan; it's even waur than your daft Socialism, an' that's daft enough."

"Weel, then, Betty, it maun be either roun' or flat; if it's roun'——"

"We wad rowe aff o't," triumphantly put in Mrs. Macfarlan.

"An' if it's flat, wad we no be in danger o' walkin' owre the edge o't, and fa'in' doon, doon, doon into naething, eh?"

"I ne'er heard tell o' onybody fa'in' owre the edge o't Johnny, lang as I've leev'd."

"There's maybe a muckle heich wa' built a' roun' the outer edge o't, then, Betty, to prevent accidents, eh ?"

"I wadna wonder, Johnny; but the roun'ness o' the earth is jist aboot as hard to believe in as the nonsense ye talk o' the world spinnin' in space. Sic blethers! Jist imagine; if the world's spinnin' east at sic a rate, a body in Gleska wad never be able to get west the length o' Greenock, so they wadna!"

"Ha-ha-ha! 'Od, Betty, I never saw't in that licht afore. Betty, ye're an unappreciated genius—ha-ha-ha!"

"Oh, ay, jist lauch awa', Mr. John Macfarlan; but I've the richt en' o' the stick for a' that, ye unconverted Sawb-bath-breakin', Socialistic auld vaigabond that ye are! draggin' me into a heathen discussion on thé Lord's Day aboot sidereal rabbits, the shape o' the earth, an' sic like nonsense! 'Od, if ever again ye bring up the question o' star-rabbits, or the earth's shape, in my hearin', Sunday or Setterday, I'll—I'll—I'll——"

'Wheesht, Betty, wheesht! mum's the word; ye've converted me; I see't a' noo as plain's a penny. If the earth's hurryin' east, it's impossible we can ever get faur west; ye micht manage the length o' Paisley wi' a stress, but Greenock's quite oot o' the question. Ye were in the richt a' alang, Betty; the earth's clearly flat, and it's staunin' stock still. That was a bit guid rabbit."

Ay, ye're speakin' sense noo, Johnny. If ye'd stick to the rabbits, an' let the stars alane, it wad be muckle better for my comfort an' yer ain peace o' mind."

Mrs. Macfarlan at this juncture rose from the dinner-table, and began putting aside the dishes, in which job she was handily helped by her auldest lassie, Maggie.

She was nae mair than half thro' wi't, however, when Johnny, who was jist preparing himsel' for a leisurely

"smoke," was startled, doon to the length o' his very bauchels, by a terrific scream, which was instantly followed by the crash o' some delf, which Mrs. Macfarlan had nervously let fall to the floor.

"Oh!—oh!!—oh!!!"—yelled Mrs. Macfarlan, every expletive rising to a higher note of horror.

"In the name o' guidness, Betty, what's gaen wrang at a'? Ha'e ye swallowed a fork, or what?"

"Oh, Johnny Macfarlan, what's this ye've dune? In the name o' mercy, what's that I see?" and Mrs. Macfarlan, her eyes staring in her head, kept pointing at an object only half discovered under the pawn of the kitchen-bed.

Johnny looked as directed, and, horror! the head of the rabbit was peering out, its delicate nostrils twitching with nervous excitement.

Johnny, it must be confessed, was almost, if not altogether, as clean dumfoundert at the startling sight as was his wife, Betty.

The idea of the "biled-and-eaten" rabbit discovering itself below the pawn of the kitchen-bed! and it safe and snug, too, in the general family stomach! The thing was clearly impossible!—nonsense!

Johnny went nervously over to grup the "thing," as he called it, when fuff, it jump't briskly across the floor, in sight of the entire family circle.

"Oh, Johnny Macfarlan! Johnny Macfarlan! what's this ye've dune to me! What was it ye biled in the pat?"

"It was the rabbit, Betty, the—the—the rabbit!"

"Then tell me what's that?" retorted Mrs. Macfarlan, pointing pathetically at the still alive rabbit.

"It's—it's—it's, eh, an optical delusion!" gasped out Johnny, who was at as great a loss as his wife, Betty, to understand the startling situation.

"An optical delusion!—eh, Lord, what sort o' a thing was that to bile in a pat? An optical delusion! Ye've been

experimenting on me, ye heartless monster! Oh, I'm pushion't! I feel I'm pushion't! Rin for the doctor!—oh-oh! oh-oh! oh-oh!"

"Ay, Betty, an optical delusion! or if ye—ye—ye'll no believe that, it must then have been a sort o'—sort o'—sort o' spiritualistic rabbit—the late article!—a kind o' rabbit medium, so to speak, that has got sort o'—eh—sort o'—sort o'—eh—materialised again, ye understan'. Ye see, Betty, there's nae real reason, when ye look at it, why rabbits shouldna ha'e souls as weel as men and women folks—wee souls, ye ken, Betty, maybe the size o' hazel nits—an' granting that, Betty, the late biled-an'-eaten rabbit has maybe cam' back in the material flesh, so to speak, jist to kind o' bid us an affectionate guid-bye; though, I frankly confess, Betty, I'd much rather see the animal sittin' in a higher sphere the noo, chowin' a spiritualistic cabbage blade, than fuddin' aboot oor floor-heid, after being, to a' intents and purposes, baith biled an' eaten! It's a problem, Betty, the reappearance o't—an incomprehensible, mysterious, philosophic problem."

"Tell me this moment what ye biled in that pat? ye low, reckless, experimenting vaigabond!"

"The rabbit, Betty; I bile't naething but the late rabbit; an' ye must allow it was carefully sauted an' pepper't to taste."

"Whaur did ye fling the skin an the feet o't? answer me that, Johnny Macfarlan, that I may see what in a' the earth ye biled in the pat? Whaur put ye the feet o't?"

"In the ash-bakey there," frankly ad tted the puzzled husband.

In a moment Mrs. Macfarlan, fearfully suspicious of the awful truth, had caught up the domestic article of use named, and was anxiously peering inside of it.

A single brief glance assured her wavering mind of the shocking truth. There lay the cat's skin, and the cat's four

paws which Johnny had so cleverly snipped off. Horror of horrors! they had actually eaten the cat! which, through short-sightedness, Johnny had killed in place of the rabbit.

When the awful disclosure was thus made certain to poor Mrs. Macfarlan, she lifted up her voice afresh and—yelled, literally yelled! At the same moment, too, she dropped the "bakey" on the floor, and would the next instant have dropped bodily herself, if Johnny had not caught her in his heroic arms.

"Weel," quo Johnny, "I've heard o men folks gettin' the babby to haud; but och, it's a sair morning when a man o' licht wecht gets the wife to haud, an' her seventeen stane, if she's an ounce! Neither biled rabbits nor German sausages could lang withstand an armfu' like that!'

THE WASHING-HOUSE KEY.

Mrs. Peascone was a Gleska housewife, and her man Patie was a journeyman baker. She lived in the top flat of a five-story East-end tenement, and had for a "below-neibor" a certain Mrs. Sooty, whose worthy guidman was "daein' for himsel'," as a thriving sweep.

Now Mrs. Peascone and her neibor-housewife, Mrs. Sooty, were about as like each other in temper as their worthy husbands were opposite in trade-colour, and that's no saying little.

They were both badly afflicted with uppish notions, were jealous of each other "getting on" in the world, and had tongues in their head that went without greasing.

A fortnight back, the worthy pair had a bigger row than usual, and it a' riz oot o' the disputed possession o' that vexatious article o' domestic need—the washin'-hoose key.

Last Monday mornin', it was clearly somebody's "turn" o' the washin'-hoose, but, the day being fine, twa o' the tenants claimed it, and hence the awfu' row.

"Can I get that washin'-hoose key frae ye the day, Mrs. Peascone?" asked Mrs. Sooty, resting her hands on her twa stout hainches, as she defiantly confronted her rival, the baker's better-half.

"No, indeed, Mrs. Sooty, I'm needn't mysel'; what's mair, it's no your turn," answered Mrs. Peascone.

"But it is my turn," replied the sweep's charmer

"But it's no, an' ye'll no get it," retorted Mrs. Peascone

'But it is, an' I will," persisted Mrs. Sooty.

"But I'm tellin' ye, ye'll no," snapped Mrs. Peascone, her words tasting of temper.

"An' what am I to dae, then This is my day o't; my things are a' turned oot an' ready for the biler; tell me, what on a' the earth am I to dae, Mrs. Peascone?"

"Oh, jist dae withoot it, Mrs. Sooty, as mony a better woman has often had to dae before noo," snapped Mrs. Peascone.

"Ye impident woman!" returned Mrs. Sooty, "to presume to talk to yer betters in that fashion! There's peascone conceit for ye! H'm! peascones, five for tippence!"

"My betters!—h m! I'm of mair account than an auld pock o' soot, onyway," retorted Mrs. Peascone.

"Weel, maybe, Mrs. Peascone, but let me tell ye this: you, above onybody, should never be in a hurry to expose your poverty-stricken washin'; for it's weel ken't there's no a rag ye hing oot but has a hole in't a craw could flee through; an' as for your puir man's shirts, they're jist fair greetin' apologies!"

"An' what business ha'e ye to meddle wi' my man, or what he pits on his honest back, ye arrant jaud that ye are! He's aye white an' clean onyway, an' that's a deal mair than

can in common conscience be said o' your dirty auld pock o' soot!" and Mrs. Peascone slapped her hands together by way of enforcing her sarcastic taunt.

"My dirty auld pock o' soot! Weel, a sweep's as guid as twa floury bakers ony day. What's mair, Mrs. Peascone, oor Johnny's no nearly sae auld as your floury Pate; an' that's tellin' ye to your face, Mrs. Peascone!"

"Ay! ou, ay! an' I suppose, according to that, ye'll be for makin' oot that ye yoursel' are really younger than I am, Mrs. Sooty?"

"By a guid dizzen o' years onyway, auld peascones, five for tippence!"

"Weel, if ever I heard the like o' that!" exclaimed Mrs. Peascone, lifting her two hands as if in supplication, "an' me jist twenty-five next Martimas!"

"Twenty-five next Martimas, Mrs. Peascone! Ye're fifty, if ye're a day! an' that's tellin' ye to your faded face!"

"My faded face! Weel, of course, it's no sae puffy as your puddin' face—that's understood, Mrs. Sooty. We're no a' sae dooble-faced as ye are, feedin' a' day on ham and eggs behind your puir man's back; while he has to hing thegither on parritch the hale week! It's no what a woman mak's o' hersel', Mrs. Sooty—it's what she mak's o' her man. Compare oor twa men, Mrs. Sooty!—compare oor twa men! Ah! ye're sair hit there, my woman!"

A shout of derisive laughter was Mrs. Sooty's tantalising response.

"Oh, ye may lauch, but it's what a' body kens," persisted Mrs. Peascone.

"Ay, I may weel lauch," sneered Mrs. Sooty; "an' dae ye really ca' puir, wander't-lookin' Patie Peascone a 'man'? If ye dae, ye're a darin' woman, Mrs. Peascone!"

"Weel, he's certainly something better than a twisted-lookin', bowley-leggit, wee handfu' o' humanity like your insignificant bit object o' a man!" thrust in Mrs. Peascone.

"An' wad ye really ha'e the cheek to compare for a moment yon lang, thin, shilpit, pipe-shankit, white-chaff't drink-o'-soor-milk-an'-cauld-gruel to oor Johnny? Na, na! Patie Peascone will never for one moment compare wi' Johnny Sooty; for if Johnny is a thocht bowley in the legs, he's no in-knee'd, thank guidness!"

"H'm! a bonnie airmfu' atweel!" sneered Mrs. Peascone; "set her up wi' a black sweep!"

"He's as guid-lookin' as your lang, white, deein'-lookin' streak-o'-cauld-dough, onyway!" snapped Mrs. Sooty. "An' if I but ken't the bake-house he tramps the dough in wi' his big splay feet, I wadna alloo mysel' to carry a single loaf oot o' the premises—neither for love nor money! D'ye hear that, Mrs. Peascone?"

"An' if I ha'e to tramp five miles when next I need my kitchen lum soop't, your man 'll no dae 't; dae you hear that, Mrs. Sooty? The last time he pretended to soop my kitchen vent, he chairged me sixpence for twa minutes' wark, an' it was smokin' waur than ever three days after 't!"

"Sixpence, did ye say, Mrs. Peascone? It's ninepence that's the professional price. But oor Johnny's a rale feeling man, an' if he only chairged you sixpence, it's been because he took fair pity on your cauld nose an' starved-lookin' face, puir woman!"

"I want nane o' your insultin' remarks, ye ill-tongued sweep's wife!" replied Mrs. Peascone, warming up a bit.

"Nor I your's either, ye lang, ill-filled bag o' flour!" retorted Mrs. Sooty.

"G'wa oot o' my presence, ye black-lookin' pock o' soot!" rejoined Mrs. Peascone, making to shut her door.

"Deliver me up that washin'-hoose key, then, ye peascone-lookin' fricht!" demanded the wroth Mrs. Sooty.

"Ay, when it's your turn o' the washin'-hoose; but no till then, if ye were to bring the lan' doon aboot my lugs!"

and with a loud *bang* Mrs. Peascone slammed her door in the face of her defeated rival.

Mrs. Sooty, though thus severely handicapped, was not to be so easily done. She wanted the last word, and she had it. Bending down, she placed her mouth at the key-hole of the closed door, and shouted in—

"Ye're a' there, Mrs. Peascone; but tell me, if you please, wha was't put a bawbee in the kirk-plate, an' lifted oot the fourpenny bit, eh? Answer me that, auld taurrie fingers?"

Mrs. Sooty waited an answer, which, however, never came; so, having thus spiked the enemy's cannon, she considered herself free to withdraw with honour from the field of strife.

The "row," however, was not yet ended. About eight o'clock that same evening, a loud assertive knock brought Mrs. Sooty to her door with unusual promptitude, and, on opening the door, she was slightly taken aback to find herself confronted with the worthy man of flour himself—Patie Peascone.

Mrs. Sooty took in the situation at a glance, and awaited impending hostilities.

"Did you ca' my wife a thief this mornin', Mrs. Sooty?" solemnly asked the baker, his eyes rolling in his head with nervous excitement.

"No; I never used siccan words, Mr. Peascone."

"Did ye no say Mrs. Peascone drap't a bawbee in the kirk-plate, an' pick't up a fourpenny bit? Answer me that."

"Johnny, come here a moment; Mr. Peascone wants to see ye," was Mrs. Sooty's adroit reply.

In two seconds the veritable Johnny was at the door, still unwashed, like his toiling brother Patie, who had come down to settle the row in his shirt-sleeves.

"What's wrang?" inquired the sweep. "Wha's lum's on fire?"

3

"Mrs. Sooty, there, ca'd my wife a thief this mornin'; that's what's wrang wi' the batch o' bread!"

"I never did," answered the sweep's charmer; "I merely asked her, in a ceevil way, wha was't put the bawbee in the kirk-plate, an' syne lifted oot the fourpenny bit; that was a'!"

"An' is that no ca'in' my wife a thief in plain words?" asked the wroth baker.

"Well, not necessarily," put in the ingenious man of soot, sticking his two thumbs in the armpits of his waistcoat; "it simply implies that the points o' your wife's five fingers were unduly magnetised; that's a'!"

"I want nae nonsense, Mr. Sooty."

"Neither dae I, Mr. Peascone."

"Then what apology am I to cairry up to my abused mistress?" demanded the angry man of flour.

"Nane whatever," answered the self-assured man of soot.

"Then tak' that!" said the baker, slapping the sweep's begrimed "face-plate" with his floury bonnet.

"An' tak' you that!" as smartly replied the man of soot, leaving the black impress of his five sooty knuckles on the baker's floury countenance.

A free fight thereupon ensued. Consider the exquisite situation—*a sweep and a baker fechtin'!* The result in a pictorial sense was graphic and amusing in the extreme. In ten seconds the whole stairhead was turned out, including the rival housewives, and for some minutes nothing was to be seen but a great cloud of white and black dust, with the legs and arms of the combatants flashing through it like the spokes of a revolving wheel.

The alarm being raised, Dugal MacSporran, a Highland constable, who happened to be perambulating the back-court, came hurrying up, and seeing a great cloud of dust on the stairhead, with a wheel of human legs and arms revolving through it, he concluded that the house below

was on fire, and that the imprisoned tenants were struggling to burst their way up through the broken ceiling.

Clutching at a displayed hand, he quickly dragged out Mrs. Peascone, who made strong efforts to return, crying aloud,—

"My man! my puir murdered man!"

"Haud her back!" sang out the excited constable, while, quick as thought, he made seizure of a second arm, and dragged into view the veritable baker, who was spotted from head to heel with great black splairges of soot.

In a crack, the energetic constable had succeeded in hauling out from the heart of the supposed flames the two remaining victims, thus completing the noble work of rescue, and the cloud of dust having cleared away, the mistaken constable saw with astonishment the lobby floor whole and uninjured.

"Bless my heart!" he once more exclaimed, addressing the turned-out stairhead, "if I'll no thocht there was a great fire raging in ta hoose below, wi' six or twa o' the tenants being burned to death in ta raging flames!"

"It's waur than even that," answered the man of dough, "it's the murder o' my wife's character by that black woman there, an' the attempted murder o' mysel' by that African man o' hers!—that common lum-sweep!"

"An' I've a counter chairge against that peascone lunatic there," retorted the man o' soot. "Look at the awfu' mess he's made o' my 'mournings'! I'll need to be rubbed a' owre wi' a cake o' Nixey's black-lead to get back my lost trade colour. The floury rascal has spotted me like a Chinese panther. Look at the mess I'm in! Just look at that! Catch me gettin' into grups again wi' a baker! Not if Joseph knows it!"—(vigorously brushing off the white flour from his sable "mournings.")

"I'll see! I'll see! It's shist a common stairhead-fecht," said the constable; "an' when you'll next fecht, my goot

friends, I hope that, like ta Kilkenny cats, ye'll no stop till there's naething left o' ta lot o' ye but six or fowr pairs o' auld bachels. Coot night!"

Mrs. Sooty and the worthy Mrs. Peascone are far frae being close friends yet, but a few days after the diverting "row," the twa husbands successfully "made it up" owre a snug dram, shaking hands with each other up to the very elbows.

As for the disputed washing-house key, it still remains a bone of contention on that same stairhead, and is likely to remain so, unless the disputants learn to think less of themselves and more of their neighbours—an advice worthy of the best domestic cultivation.

THE WOOIN' O' KATE DALRYMPLE.

In the gable end of a row of old thack houses, which formed, half-a-century since, a wing of the weaving clachan of Strathbungo, lived Kate Dalrymple, a homely old maid of some sixty odd summers.

Kate, according to rumour, was quite the reverse of a beauty. She had neither features nor complexion, and circumstances had made her very poor and dependent.

Thus situated, poor, neglected Kate Dalrymple had been allowed to vegetate into the condition of a sour old maid, without a single lover ever "speerin' her price." Kate, of course, maintained a very different story. She had been asked in marriage times without number, but she had never yet seen the man she could thole to love and live with.

But the chance occurrences of life are many, and an accidental event—the rumour of which was already brewing in the parish—was destined to completely change the quiet tenor of Kate Dalrymple's lonely and neglected existence.

Her maternal uncle—a rich, old Indian merchant—had died suddenly abroad, leaving her, rumour said, a legacy of £10,000.

There was a grain of truth in the rumour. The rich old uncle had really died, and had left his obscure relative, Kate Dalrymple, ten pounds—if not £10,000! The bulk of the deceased uncle's fortune had gone to a surviving sister in England, and the ten pounds legacied to poor Kate Dalrymple had been gratuitously magnified by the village gossips into the startling sum of £10,000!

Kate, it must be understood, was not responsible for tne error. She was daily and hourly hearing the sum left her variously stated, each rumour taking a higher flight than the former, until—in imagination, at least—she might rate herself the wealthiest maiden lady in the village.

The result of all this, as was to be expected, was amusing in the extreme. By a curious reversion of all her former experiences, Kate, hitherto the loneliest and most neglected of womankind, now found herself the observed of all observers. Hats and caps were respectfully lifted to her as she modestly limped by; while courtesies and congratulations from unknown friends and relatives were freely offered her.

All this was novel and amusing to poor Kate, if not actually agreeable and pleasant. It was useless attempting to reason down the absurd rumour. It daily grew in proportion to the opposition offered it. The village had made up its mind on the matter, and lucky Kate Dalrymple was now a wealthy and fortunate woman, who would prove a fine "catch" to some needy fortune-hunter, gifted with an elastic conscience, and an oily flattering tongue. Within the last few days, she had been visited in turn by the entire village, from the parish minister down, and the harder she tried to reason her friends out of the amusing mistake, the more strongly did the wondering villagers believe in the reality of her £10,000 legacy!

The rumour soon spread beyond the parish boundaries, and Willie Postie, the village letter-carrier, was "jist kept on the trot" delivering letters of congratulation to Kate, from outlying friends and relations, of whose existence she had never known before.

A number of these epistles took the form of love-letters, the writers of which, in numerous instances, made business-like offers for her hand; and Kate Dalrymple was an amused, if not a happy woman in the perusal of their contents.

It was an occasion of this kind that Kate, having had an extra bundle of letters put into her hand one evening, sat down to a perusal of their contents, fortified against anything approaching to nervous surprise by taking a good preliminary pinch of snuff. Seating herself by the fire, she proceeded to inspect the letters in detail.

"Here's yin frae David Dinwiddie, warper, Clayslaps. Weel, we'se hear what Davoc Dinwiddie's sayin' till't, tho' I'm certain I never in life had the pleasure o' even kennin' him."

Kate reads:—

"12 Stoor Terrace,
"Clayslaps, October the second.

"My deer Miss Kate,—Pleeze accp the followin' pome, addrest to yoor sweet self. I hav long admired yoo in seekret, and I now taik the followin' oppertunity of addressin' my love-shoot to yoo in person, direck from the auld Clayslaps, where, in youth's flowery morning, wee twa ha'e paidl't in the burn, and pu'd the gowans fine.—Hopin I am not forgotten, yours till death do us divide,

"David Dinwiddie.

"POME.

"To Miss Kate Dalrymple.

"*(Written and Composed by her loving admirer, David Dinwiddie.)*

"When you an' I was young, Kate,
We werena vera auld,
We roam'd thegither thro' the 'Slaps,
As I've in trooth been tauld.

Sometimes we walkit airm in airm,
  Sometimes we sittit doon,
But aye the owre-come o' oor sang
  Was love's seraphic tune.

"I lov'd the weegle in your walk,
  Sae bonnilie ye went;
I lov'd the sneevil in your talk,
  Doon thro' the nostrils sent;
I lov'd ye early, lov'd ye late—
  Nae love, dear Kate, like mine!
O, wilt thou—wilt thou—wilt thou be
  My ain auld valentine?

"*P.S.*—Dear Kate,—Sir Walter Scott addresst a pome to Mrs. Scott's eyebroos—but, between you an' me, Kate, there's no yae feature o' yer bonnie face mair than anither that I could specialise oot for pomeing. Where all is sweetness an' grace, it wood be invidious to particularise. Perfection whispered passing by, 'There goes Kate Dalrymple!'

"Second *P.S.*—A line frae you to Clayslaps telling me when to call on ye, wood much oblige your devoted

"D. D.

"Na, na, Davoc Dinwiddie," soliloquised Kate, "it'll no fit; yer statement's a stowp that'll no cairry water. I'll gi'e yer love-epistle a warm reception onyway, whatever comes o' yer threatened visit," and, poo the warper's billet was thrown into the fire.

"What's next, I wonder?"

Reads:—

"Coal-Ree Square,
'Towe-Rowe Land, Cross-Bungo,
'Thorsday Morning, October 33rd.

"Mrs. Kait Drympell.

"Dear Mum,—I'm after axin yees, ir ye've any noshun ov chingine yer single life into the W style? If yees have, I'm yer man! And let me tell ye, a better or a more shootable husband than meself ye'll not find attwix this and—I dont know whare. I've got a good-going Coal-ree, well stock't wid all the latest black 'digs;' wid ten small

hand-barrows—all new, too, d'ye moind; not to mention a second-hand cuddy an' a cart—which the entire same is at yer swate disposall, if you'll be after having me. An' let me tell yees, in wan word—that's there not a harder-workin' coal-ree manufacturer between Towe-Rowe and I dont no whare—and miles beyond that, too, or may the hangman's rope know me neck! I've £2 in the bank; an', what's more, I'm a good man as well as a wealthy man. I've two karracters from the good priest here, and five from the ould parish minister—an' al ov racent date too, d'ye moind!—besides a whole chestful ov ould karracters, the same which I'm prepared to sell for a moderate price to any man in want ov a situation, and any single wan of which would set up a man for life; and it's the virgin truth I'm tellin' yees. An', mum, if ye're on for me, an' me Coal-ree, an' me karracters, an' me twelve new hand-barrows, an' me cuddy an' me cart, an' me £2 in the bank, an' I dont no what al, jist say what night I'll come round an' pay me addresses to yees, wid a clane shirt an' me best hat on; for I'm fairly bewitched wid yer purty face, an' yer winsum, wilin' ways, an' yer low swate musickall voice. So, name the happy day, mum, an' take possession of

"Yoor ould an' earnest Admirer,

"BARNEY COAL-GUM.

"*P.S.*—May I ax yees to favour me be return ov post wid a fottgraph ov yer own swate face, so as I may hev some noshun ov the personal appearance ov the swate an' enticin' Judy I'm now addressin'? Plase also to state if yees can count, as I've the intintion of giving yees the entire charge ov the weigh-scales in the Ree, when wance you've become the happy Mrs. Coal-Gum.—Hopin' to hev a favourable reply,

"I am, deer mum, yours entirely,

"BARNEY.

"*P.S.* wance more.—If yees moind makin' any personal enquiries about me, yees needn't; for there's not a wan in Towe-Rowe knows a happorth about me, except ould Mickey M'Ghee, and he knows nothing about me whativer; an' that's the virgin truth I'm tellin' yees, or may the rope know me neck.

"Yoor devoted wan,

"BARNEY."

"My certie!" exclaimed Kate, "a coal-ree's no to be sneezed at, wi' the winter fast settlin' doon to frost an' snaw; but, meantime, we'll pit Barney Goal-Gum's epistle amang its local acquaintances—the heart o' the fire. But, preserve us, here's anither! an' a' the way frae the Hielan's, tae!"

Reads:—

"Ta Skyes,
"Portree, October ta 85.

"To Miss Kate Dalrimple.

"MY TEER MATTAM,—I wass pe very klad to meet wis an old friend of mine from Klasko, as was bee tellin' me he wass saw you there next week, and you wass be keepin' very well whatever, and was twice as more petter than you had been before for both before and since. My wife, Petsy, is rale pad shust now with ta windy kolics in ta stomach, and if ta gale increases to a hurricane, and she'll die, I'll hev to come down to Klasko to pe seekin' a new wife; and as I'll hev heard you'll hev got ten soosand pounds left you, you cood not get a more petter man to took care of it than your well-meaning friend and future husband,

"DOUGAL M'TAVISH.

"*P. S.*—My father and your father were well acquant, and were in a manner related to each other, as I'll hev heard tell, for they very frequently often exchanged snuff-boxes, and took numerous drams wis each other on Sundays petween the kirk-preachings. So, if anything happens wis Petsy, I'll come down ta Klasko in my fishing-poat at wance, and arrange ta pisness in private wis your own sweat self.

"Yours till death, and twice as more,

"DOUGAL."

In a second Kate had flung Dougal's fish-smelling letter into the fire, and picked up the next to hand. Glancing at the address on the envelope, she read—

"*Mis Kate Dalrimpel,*
"*At the Auld Thack Hooses,*
"*Stra'bungo.*"

"Oo ay, I ken fine wha's scraggy handwriting that is—it's frae auld Jean Tow, the 'Camlachie relict,' widow o' auld Johnny Tow, an' a forty-second kizzen o' my mither's. Noo, I wonder what auld Jean's wantin' wi' me; but stop—it's the siller, I'll wager. The soogh o' my legacy's gane east the length o' Camlachie, and this is Jean's note o' congratulation."

Reads:—

"Weaver's Raw, Camlachie,
"Thursday nite,
"½ past 10 p.m.

DEER MISS KATE,—I hop this reeches yew all well, as it leeves me at presint, except a bad koff, wheech bothers me at nite, and wheech I am poultisin' with linseed meel and mustart, and a chapter off Scriptur. And now, my deer Miss Kate, to return to family matters, doo yew know, I have found out that yew and I are klossly related to each other. My late respectit faither—rest and bless him!—was half-kizzen to a full kizzen of yoor respectit mither. And so, my dear Miss Kate, to come to the pint, I'm rale glad to think ye, in a measure, blood off my blood, and flesh off my flesh. And I'm certain sure, if my late lamented Johnny Tow was leevin this day, he would be the first to congratulate us baith on the happy relashunship. But I'll be yont yoor way the morn's afternoon, when I'll tell yew all the news. For I'm wearyin' rale mutch to see yew, as there's no anither woman atween Camlachie and Stra'bungo that I respeck haff so mutch as I do my deer oot-lying frien' and blood relashun, Kate Dalrimpel.

"From yoor most affeckshunate relative,

"JEANIE TOW.

"*P.S.*—I was very neerly forgettin' to mention the news I've just heard—that you've been left a fortin'. I'm rale glad to heer o't. Is it true? Ten thoosand pounds, they say! Oh, my, Kate! if Johnny Tow had only been livin' this day—rest and bless him!—would not he have valued his wife (noo, alas! a relict) and her wealthy relashuns. Eh, me, my deer Miss Kate, but it's an unco kald bisness to be a deid man's relict, mair especially when the blankets

are worn thin, and there's nae meal in the girnel, nor ham in the fryin' pan, no to mention a 'bottle' as dry as a simmer stove! But I'll be roond yoor way the morn's afternoon, Kate, and till then I'm yoor devoted frien' and klossly-related blood relashun,

"JEANIE TOW."

"*Me* a blood relation o' auld Jean Tow's! Weel, if that's no the hicht o' impidence! She needna try to tak' the len' o' me wi' her 'My dear Miss Kate' this, and 'My dear Miss Kate' the ither thing, for—fuff—there gangs her letter into the fire! But stop! there's a knock at the door, an' I hope it's no auld Jean herself.

Kate (from the inside)—"Wha's that?"

Voice (from the outside)—"It's me, Jeanie Tow, frae Camlachie, relict o' Johnny Tow, bless his beautifu' memory!"

Obedient to the summons, Kate got to her feet, and going to the door admitted the interesting "relict."

"It's you, Jean!" was Kate's salutation; "what blast o' win' has blawn you here?"

"'Od, ye may weel ask that, Kate; I've jist been blawn clean oot o' breath in comin' sae faur on fit. Yes, I'll sit doon a blink, thankee, for I'm jist fair dune oot. Hech me! when a body gets up in life a bit, their legs fail them Ye ken, Kate, I haena oor John's kind airm to lean on noo Eh, lass, when yince a woman's been in the twa-some traces, life's a wearisome journey wantin' the bit man. Thankee, I'll tak a bit taste o't—jist the wee'st pourin', tho', for I'm deid against the dram for onything mair than medicine. A bit thimblefu' o't, tho', syndet owre wi' a strong pepper-mint drap, breaks the win' on the stammach finely. Yes, Kate, in wan moment I'll tak' it oot o' yer han', thankee, but stop till I get off this precious bonnet, for I declare, the win' got sae muckle into the coal-scuttle back o't comin' doon the road there that the strings nearly cuttit awa the

very breath o' my being. Here, pit it past, if you please, an' tak care o' the feathers, for they're jist preen'd in, as ye may see."

"That's no a rale ostrich feather, is't, Jean ?"

"An ostrich feather! Fack, no! Ye'll no find Johnny Tow's modest relict sportin' an ostrich feather in her hat, Kate. It's jist a bunch o' hen's feathers. I pu'd them frae the wings o' a neibor's auld clockin' hen this mornin'."

"Weel, if that disna bate a'! An' what ava brocht ye roun' my way, Jean ?"

"Oo, jist to congratulate ye on your fortin, ye ken. I wrote an' posted ye a most beautifu' and touchin' letter, tellin' ye I was comin', did I no ?"

"Ay, Jean, but what was the use o' puttin' yersel sae much aboot owre a triflin' bit legacy that's no worth speakin' aboot ?"

"Eh, me, Miss Kate, that my twa lugs should hear ye ca' ten thoosan pounds a trifling legacy!"

"Wha tell'd ye it was ten thoosan pounds, Jean ?"

"Oh, ilka yin says't."

"Weel, ilka yin's wrang."

"Wrang!" gasped the relict.

"Ay, wrang; it was only ten pounds I was left, an' no' ten thoosan as the folks roun' aboot here threep."

"Eh, Miss Kate, but ye're a slee yin. But ye needna be ocht but confidential wi' me, for *I'm* no snokin' after yer fortin, guid kens; it's yer ain personal health an' comfort I'm concerned aboot, Kate, an' no yer ten thoosan pounds."

"Thankee, Jean; but I repeat it was only ten pounds that was left me, an' no a broon penny mair!"

"Lassie! lassie! the craws 'ill get ye for that big lee. But, d'ye ken, Miss Kate, I've brocht ye a grand present."

"An' what's that, Jean ?"

"It's jist this, Kate" (unwrapping from a newspaper an old family-sized umbrella), "an' ye're no to be perneckity

modest, an' set up an affronted refusal. There! tak' it! a grand auld family umbrella, scarcely ever used, an' no a preen-pint the waur. Here, tak' it, Miss Kate, an' lang may ye wauchle thro' life under its protectin' hap!"

"Thankee, Jean; the umbrella's big awee, but it'll prove usefu' in a doonfa' o' rain."

"Ay, an' in simmer sunshine tae, Miss Kate; for, let me remind ye, it's yer ladyship's complexion that's needin' preservin', noo that ye've become a Missey o' fortin. An', believe me, Miss Kate, a better sunshade than that same auld family umbrella disna exist between Camlachie an' the Amerikeys."

"Ay, ay, Jean; but for ony sake gi'e owre that haver aboot my legacy, my ladyship, an' a' that nonsense. It's only ten pounds, an' no a penny mair, I've been left, tak' my honest word for't."

"Miss Dalrymple, the craws 'll get ye for that big lee. Weel, I'm sure it's neither here nor there to me whether it's ten pounds or ten thoosan'. Wi't, or wantin't, ye'll aye be dear to me, as the auld sang says; tho', for yer ain dear sake, Kate, I'd like to think it the big sum."

"Thankee, Jean; but, as I've got to answer for't, it's only ten pounds I've fa'n heir to, an' no a bawbee mair."

This was a staggerer to the relict, and completely changed, as if by a stroke of magic, the whole tenor of her mind and tongue.

"An' what in a' the earth—as I should use siccan words—what in a' the earth put it into yer heid to gang an' circulate siccan an ill-set, leein', punishable rumour—eh?"

"Me set afloat the rumour! On the contrary I've been tryin' to fecht it doon for six weeks back, an' there it is, as your presence here this day shows, as lively as ever."

"Whaur's my bonnet, Kate?" demanded the confounded relict.

"Yer bonnet, Jean! 'Od, ye're surely no gaun to hurry

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awa' that way, withoot sayin' a word aboot yer ain health, or tellin' me what flowers ye're growin' owre Johnny's lamented grave—eh ?"

"The deil ban you an' Johnny baith for a pair o' even-doon swindlers! Whaur's my bonnet, Kate? It's my bonnet I'm wantin', an' this vera moment, too. Tae think (tying on her bonnet) I've come sae faur for sae little—a perfect gowk's errand! 'Od, I'm jist fair bilin'. Whaur's that umbrella I gied ye?"

"What! the 'present' ye made me? Are ye gaun to tak' that awa' wi' ye tae?"

"I've a precious guid mind to tak' the shank o't across yer chafts, ye leein', deceitfu' auld besom that ye are! Draggin' me fowr miles thro' the mud to yer miserable door a' the way frae respected Camlachie; an' a' for jist naething, tae!" and seizing up the family umbrella with an angry *snap*, the Camlachie relict flounced out of the doorway in a precipitate rush for home.

"She's awa'!" reflected Kate; "but I've yae comfort left me—I've seen the last o' Tow Jean an' her auld family umbrella, an' that's yae blessin', if no twa."

A POET'S BID FOR FAME.

JOHNNY RHYMER was a carpet-weaver to trade, and a poet by nature. He spun rhymes as easily as he spun cloth; but the latter commodity was more in request than the former, otherwise Johnny might have made a fortune out of his "poetry."

At last, however, a wag suggested to Johnny the propriety of selecting higher themes, and going in for a volume —and fame!

A volume and fame! How Johnny, simple, confiding man, caught at these talismanic words.

The idea of a book of his poems was for long a sweet and well-kept secret. At last, however, he grew so full of the ethereal subject that he was forced, under an overpowering sense of ecstasy, to confidentially communicate the momentous project to his wife.

"Mattie," he said, one night, as the pair sat before the fire, "Mattie, I'm gaun to communicate a great secret to ye."

"Ay, Johnny; an' what's that?"

"But ye maunna blab it, mind ye—maunna whisper even the wee'st word o't, d'ye hear?"

"It's hard for me when I dinna ken it yet; what's your secret, Johnny?"

"It's this—I'm gaun to publish a volume o' poems—a volume o' *my* poems, mind ye."

"Awa' to yer bed, Johnny; ye've been owre lang up the nicht," was Mattie's crushing answer.

"Ay, oh ay; that's a' the encouragement I get frae you. I'm to keep my poetic licht hid under a bushel, an' jist leeve an' dee a common carpet-weaver."

"An' what else are ye, I'd like to ken? Naething else but a plain-gaun carpet-weaver, the mair's the pity."

"I'm a poet, Mattie, an' the world will hear o't before the year's oot," was Johnny's self-conscious answer.

"If you've ony spare time on hand, Johnny, dinna, for pity's sake, spend it on poetry. There's the grate to black-lead for yae thing, an' a hundred mair things to help me wi', apairt frae rockin' the cradle on the washin'-days."

"But there's money in the project, Mattie—there's money as weel as fame in't."

"Money in't, is there? Oh, in that case ye'd best proceed. Noo, when I reflect on't, there's naething I'm fonder o' than jist a bit hamely clinkin' Scotch verse."

"Ay, Mattie; but it's something lofty I maun try for the

public—something higher, more elevated, and with some aspiring soul in it—higher! higher! higher!" and Johnny, wrapt in his theme, pointed from floor to dresser, and from dresser to shelf, until his rising imagination was summarily checked in its upward flight by the unpoetic ceiling.

"Is't an attic ye're intendin' to flit to, Johnny?" asked Mattie, in perfect sincerity.

"An attic!" sneered Johnny; "woman, ye're no fit to be the wife o' a poet. Ay, it's an attic; but it's an attic of the soul, Mattie, an attic of the soul!"

"Preserve us!" ejaculated the guileless Mattie, who knew as much about soul attics as she did about arithmetic, which was exactly nothing at all. "Weel, Johnny, if there's money in yer ploy, as ye say there is, the sooner ye're intae't, heid an' feet, the better. Wee Johnny's sair wantin' a new pair o' shune, an' I mysel' am jist on the parish for a new bonnet."

"Dinna ye be speakin' o't, Mattie, but if my poems are published, ye'll no only get a new bonnet, but I'll promise ye a grand new ostrich feather for't, as lang's yer airm."

The pleased smile which a moment after illuminated Mattie's homely countenance broadened so ineffably as to almost put the ends of her rather large mouth into contact with the tips of her two ears, and the plot of publishing Johnny's "poems" was thereupon mutually agreed to as the right and proper thing to do.

So, after a mature consideration of about three minutes duration, Johnny sat down and concocted a grand "prospectus," in the following "drawing" terms:—

In the Press, and will be shortly Published
Price (to Subscribers) 2s. 6d.,
THREADS FROM THE SHUTTLE OF SONG,
By Johnny Rhymer.

In submitting his prospectus the author desires to state that he has been very warmly encouraged to do so by

numerous friends and admirers of his works in verse. The volume will contain fifty-seven pieces in all, including the author's three popular topical songs:—

"Maggie, is your Mother out?"
"Don't Lift a Dog by the Tail."
"Give Me a Chance to do Well."

The author was in high hopes of making up the collection to sixty pieces, but his laudable intention was twice frustrated, his youngest child having one week succumbed to the measles, while the following Friday happened to be "washing-day," which once more upset his sweet incantations with the Nine delightful Muses.

Although flattered by the warm praises of perhaps too partial friends, the author has not, he sincerely hopes, allowed his native modesty to be altogether eclipsed. He recognises himself, poetically of course, as a small fly on one of the wheels of the great Chariot of Poetry, as drawn through space by the glorious steeds of the sun! He hopes, however, to one day have an honoured seat on the "dicky," and to jerk a god-like rein.

Intending subscribers should send in their names and addresses without delay (as the edition is limited) to the author,

JOHNNY RHYMER,
963 Poetical Place
(Off Poverty Square),
GLASGOW.

Right-hand Door (3rd in the Lobby),
(7 Stairs Up).

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!

"That'll draw subscribers, Mattie, just like a fair mustard poultice," said Johnny, the moment he had completed the composition of it, the sweat hailing down his rubicund nose in crystal beads.

"I hope sae," was Mattie's cautious response, "for I'm in sair need o' a new bonnet."

"Dinna talk aboot bonnets the noo, Mattie; cultivate, for at least six weeks to come, a soul above ribbons an' sic

falderals," was Johnny's rather cutting retort, as he rammed on his hat and hurried like lichtnin' to the printer's, with the prospectus of his poems in his breeks' pocket.

Next day Johnny was gratified in seeing his "prospectus" in all the glory of print, and he handed copies about to his friends and acquaintances with a self-complacent smile which was truly delightful to behold. Johnny Rhymer, it seemed, was already on the high road to fame—was, in fact, off the mere wheel, and was now sitting on "the dicky" of the great Chariot of Poetry.

"What's the meaning of GOD SAVE THE QUEEN at the end of your prospectus?" very gravely asked a Radical friend of Johnny's; "is it a bid for a pension, or what?"

"No, no, no! It's loyalty! loyalty! loyalty!" proudly answered Johnny.

"And you a Radical, Johnny?"

"True friend; but remember I am also a poet!—a poet! and being a poet, my soul is broad enough to take in all sects and schisms. I am a liberal-minded Radical, and my soul is as wide in its sweep as the circling heavens!" and making his hand fly round at arm's length, expressive of his words, he accidentally struck off the hat of his friend, who quickly concluded that poetry had "tooken" Johnny's brain; that he was not quite responsible for his actions; and that he very probably meant murder against all such as refused to subscribe for his poems. So picking up his hat in a hurry, he cried aloud:—

"Put down my name for a copy of your blooming book of poetry, and let me off safe!" And in ten seconds the excited subscriber had put such distance between himself and the gifted son of the Muses as his bodily safety seemed to require.

Indeed, the job of canvassing subscribers' names was a very disheartening one to Johnny, whose spirit was as far above servility as his poetic soul was above potatoes. One

rascally person told him that he had no desire to encourage self-imposed lunacy, and invited him, if he was a poet worth his salt, to find a rhyme for the word "orange," a feat which Johnny distinctly failed to accomplish. Another man, at whose house he called, set the dog on him; while a third callous ruffian threatened to hand him over to the authorities, under warrant of the Police-Bill clause affecting the disposal of beggars. Moreover, a professional phrenologist on whom he waited, wanted to "read" his head "as a curiosity;" a local barber threatened to "shave him;" while a rival poet whom he accidentally met, and who was also "on the cadge" with *his* prospectus, fought him with his two fists on the question of priority of canvass, and left Johnny lying on the ground figuratively bleeding at every pore, and seeing six ways at once. In fact, what Johnny Rhymer endured on account of his aspiring bid for poetic fame, the gross material world shall never, never, never know! Johnny, in just revenge, wrote an epigram on the business, which was as follows:—

FAME.

Say, what is Fame?—a treacle stick;
The poet, he aspires to suck it;
It spins and fades—a showman's trick—
And he is left to kick-the-bucket!
In other words, the Summer skies,
That lured him on, resolve to Winter;
The hope recedes! the vision dies!
And he is left to fecht the printer!

Having thus emptied his charged soul, Johnny concluded to canvass names no more, but to depend on the merits of his book, and a public advertisement.

Thus, when the book was really ready for sale, Johnny took his wife into extreme confidence on the subject, and inserted a drawing advertisement in a local weekly newspaper.

He was a poet, of course, and being a poet was very sanguine of success, so he naturally expected a rush of letters

for copies of his book. Thus, he hopefully invested sixpence in two quires of white wrapping paper, 2½d. in a small ball of coloured string, a penny in a bottle of gum "warranted to stick," and about five shillings in postage stamps,—all for the sending out of his books.

The advertisement duly appeared, and at the kirk on the following Sunday Johnny could not fix his mind on the minister's sermon for two consecutive minutes for thinking of the shoal of letters expected by the Monday morning post. In fact, he didn't go out that morning to his work, so as to be ready for the arrival of the 8 o'clock post, and between 8 and 9 o'clock he asked his wife, Mattie, a hundred times, "if the postman wasna to be seen in the street yet?"

Ah, yes! there was that anxiously-waited-for postman at last! He came down the street, crossed over to Johnny's side, and—passed on to the close below!

"It's a mistake!" gasped out Johnny; "that postman's no' a' there! he's overlooked my bag o' letters; I'll see him aboot it," and he was making for the door, when an idea struck him, with the force of a brick, that perhaps the replies to the "advertisement" were so numerous, and the bundle of letters so very huge, that a special man would shortly arrive at the house with the whole bagful on his aching back, or a postal van, perhaps, painted red, and with V.R. inscribed on each side of it, would consign its bulky contents at his door, 963 Poetical Place, Poverty Square.

Full of this pleasing delusion, Johnny waited at home till ten minutes before ten o'clock, but no bagful of letters arrived, and with a rather vague sense of defeat at his heart, he returned to work responsive to the imperative call of the factory bell.

All that day he was busy inventing excuses for the non-appearance of the expected letters. It was too soon to look for replies, as the public hadn't yet had time to write. When he returned home at night there would, of course, be

quite a pile of letters waiting him, and he would be gloriously busy all night wrapping up books for the post.

At six o'clock Johnny returned home, and his first words to Mattie were—

"Is there ony letters?"

"Yes," said Mattie.

"Hooray! hoo mony?"

"Yin!"

"Great Jupiter!" gasped out Johnny, as he extended his hand for the solitary reply to his newspaper advertisement.

He opened it, and found, to his sheer disgust and disappointment, that the writer was also a poet, who, having seen his address, took the liberty of asking him to subscribe for *his* volume, to help him to pay the printer, as he had lost £10 by the venture, hoping that he (the advertiser) would be more successful.

Johnny flung the letter into the fire, and drew a sigh three feet in length.

For the three succeeding days he received letters from various quarters on quite a variety of topics, but no subscriptions for his volume. He had letters from German lottery-dealers, cards from local jobbing printers, and requests from country poets to furnish them with details of the cost of publishing a book of poems, with directions as to the best method of procedure. All these Johnny deliberately tossed into the fire, without the slightest feeling of compunction, poetical or otherwise. He was hunting up for a solitary subscriber to his book, but hadn't yet found one.

At last, to bring matters to a crisis, the printer's account arrived—a truly formidable document, which gave Johnny a combined dose of the toothache and the "shakers."

However, light was at last born out of the darkness which surrounded him. A letter by-and-by did come!—a letter of the right sort, too, which was a veritable prophecy of golden fortune to him.

The heaven-sent epistle ran thus:—

"Priory Gardens, Gorse-Town.

"MY DEAR, BELOVED BARD,—I notice with unfeigned pleasure the advertisement relative to your book of poems. Modestly, yet with a feeling of just pride, you state yourself to be the author of that most charming of modern song-gems, which I have never read, 'Give Me a Chance to do Well.' I will give you a chance, my dear, delightful brother bard. Put me down for fifty copies of your book of poems, at £1 each! Please deliver them here in person, at your very earliest convenience, and, believe me, your sincere admirer, "FRED FANCIFUL.

"To Johnny Rhymer, Poet."

"Hooray! hooray!! hooray!!!" shouted Johnny, when he had read the flattering and highly generous epistle. "Mattie, my fortune's made! I've found a generous patron at last! Hooray!"

"Then my new bonnet's a' richt, Johnny, I suppose?"

"Gor, woman, can ye no haud yer clackin' tongue aboot bonnets till a body gets richt haud o' a spoke o' the whirlin' wheel o' fortune! I'm fair sick o' baith you an' your new bonnets. Cultivate poetry, woman; there's something grand an' soul-ennoblin' in the very name o't! Weather wet or dry, I tak' the road for Gorse-Town the morn's mornin'."

And Johnny did take the road by eight o'clock next morning, with a sweet bundle of fifty copies of his Poems on his back—a happy sort of poetical Pilgrim's Progress setting out from the City of Neglect, his eyes and his hopes set on the fair Gardens of Patronage, to which the beneficent voice of a golden Promise had generously invited him.

Gorse-Town was eight miles distant from Glasgow, and within two hours he had sighted Priory Gardens, and was presently within the wicket-gate opening on the lawn.

A venerable-looking old gentleman, with long, flowing, white hair, and a smiling expression of countenance, was complacently sunning himself in a green arbour, which

overlooked a sloping garden of flowers. In the distance, the stone porticoes of a noble old country manor-house were seen through the intervening trees.

"Meet residence for a patron of the poets!" muttered Johnny to himself, as he stepped towards the venerable-looking old gentleman in the arbour, whom he rightly concluded to be the proprietor and good genius of the place, who had so generously invited him there.

"Mr. Frederick Fanciful, I presume," deferentially said Johnny, dropping his bundle of books on the gravel walk.

"That's me," said the venerable-looking old gentleman, smiling with a most angelic sweetness of expression. "Pray, sir, whom have I the pleasure of addressing?"

"I'm Johnny Rhymer, the—the—the poet, sir,' stammered out Johnny.

"Abraham—Isaac—and—Jacob!" exclaimed the enraptured patron, "do my privileged eyes indeed behold a poet! Oh, this is a proud moment of my existence!—a red-letter field-day in the diary of my life! Come to my arms, my bard! my brother!" and before Johnny could wink twice, he was literally in the fond arms of his generous patron, and all but suffocated with pressure and snuff!

"Achee! achay! achoo!" sneezed Johnny, when relieved from his patron's choking embrace. Then, he first wiped the water from his weeping eyes, and afterwards ventured to make an allusion to the kind order for the fiftv copies of his book of poems so generously given him.

"Oh, yes, of course, of course," answered the good, kind old gentleman, "I will be delighted to patronise and reward you; but, alas! here comes my evil genius. I must get me gone. Adieu for the present; may we meet above!" and kissing his jewelled hand to Johnny, the venerable-looking old gentleman bowed himself most amiably off.

In two seconds a big, strong, rough-looking fellow confronted Johnny.

"What do you want here, fellow?" he gruffly demanded.

Johnny, in faltering accents, detailed the nature and purpose of his visit.

"Great sticks! are you another poet?" said the fellow, with a shout of laughter; "there have been fourteen poets here this week already! Are you not aware the old guv'nor (directing his finger at the retiring figure of the good genius of the gardens)—are you not aware, I ask, that the old guv'nor is touched? (tapping his brow with his forefinger). It's his weakness to write to poets offering them sums of money, averaging from £5 to £500 for so many copies of their works. This is your lot of books, I presume? [Johnny nodded.] Well, pick it up and begone!"

"But the books were ordered; I have the old gentleman's letter, and I claim damages—expenses," put in Johnny, his whole poetic soul rising into his mouth; "yes, I claim substantial damages!"

"You claim damages, you do? Then you shall have them," said the rough-looking keeper, and catching up Johnny he at once chucked him bodily over the hedge into the roadway.

Johnny lighted on his physical "fours," and had just succeeded in scrambling to his two ordinary feet, when he was once more struck to the earth by his bundle of books which the unceremonious keeper had thrown after their excommunicated author.

Such was the end of Johnny Rhymer's dream of fame. Crest-fallen and broken-hearted, he trudged back to the city as dead in spirits as a door-nail. He has since abandoned poetry as a fraud, and now sticks to carpet-weaving.

Mattie, poor woman, is aye wearing her auld bonnet yet; the printer's account is still unpaid; while Johnny remains a fixed resident in Poverty Square.

JOCK BROON'S PATENT UMBRELLA.

JOCK BROON was a neglected genius of an inventive turn of mind, who believed in himself, and had ideas. Jock was a born genius, as his mother declared, and had suggested improvements on the rockers of his cradle as soon as he could articulate speech. Before he had grown up to manhood Jock had invented a whole lot of crack ideas, which the stupidity of the public, unfortunately for themselves, would neither acknowledge nor adopt. Jock regretted this, but hopefully wrocht awa' at his inventions, until his mither's back-room was as full of plans, sectional views, drawings, and mechanical models as a town's museum.

" Man, Jock," said his mither yae day, " if ye could only manage to invent something usefu' your fortune wad be made. Try your talents on something domestic—an improvement in the way o' dress, for instance. There's lots o' room for improvements there."

Thus encouraged, Jock set to, and invented a machine for stamping the buttons on bachelor's shirts without the trouble o' shooin' them on wi' thread; the poor married men, as Jock observed, seldom having shirts to shoo buttons on. The bachelor part of the population, however, fatally blind to their own interests, never took up Jock's brilliant idea.

Nothing daunted, however, Jock next tried his hand on what he loftily styled a " New Patent Combination Umbrella-Hat." The hat in dry weather looked an ordinary one; but, when rain came down, by touching a small elastic spring, out flopped a broad waterfall rim, which completely covered and protected face, back, and shoulders.

This was an original idea. The first day Jock tested it he was chased for his life down the Gleska Gallowgate by

a howling mob of boys, and half-a-dozen of frenzied policemen as an escaped lunatic. By running twice round King William's statue, however, he slipped his pursuers, and finally escaped up yin o' the dark stairs o' the Tontine Close. Concluding, therefore, that this last "idea" was a trifle in advance of the age, Jock philosophically dropped the Umbrella-Hat notion, and wisely thought of something else.

Weel, yae stormy nicht, shortly afterwards, in comes Jock's mither wi' her auld umbrella blawn outside-in, and a look o' distress on her face calculated to draw tears o' sympathy frae a tailor's goose.

"Man, Jock," she said, "could ye no steep yer brains a bit, an' invent a new umbrella that wad be storm-proof as well as rain-proof, an' wadna be liable to be blawn ootside-in?"

"Oo, ay, easy,' said Jock, and there and then he fell to, and completed in three weeks a grand new "Patent Storm-Proof Umbrella," of most capacious size, and which was as full of ribs, and stays, and patent snap-fastenings as it could stick. When completed, Jock warranted his new hurricane umbrella to successfully withstand forty pounds o' win' to the square inch, outside or inside!

Having the courage of his convictions, Jock, on the first wild stormy day, set out to test his new 76-ribbed storm-proof umbrella, and the result was picturesque in the extreme.

It was raining sma' burns, an' blawin' like perfect mad, when Jock triumphantly set out, and he hadn't proceeded six yards till he knew his invention to be a great and unqualified success. Twa-three times terrific gusts o' wind caught the wide-spread umbrella right under, and nearly lifted the inventor off his twa feet, but Jock held firmly on, and the umbrella, to his great satisfaction, remained unreversed, and was apparently quite irreversible. Neither wind nor hail could succeed in even shaking it. Nothing, in fact,

short of a tumble-down chimney-can, or an overset street wall, was at all likely to affect its stability in the slightest degree.

"It's a grand success," thought Jock, as he ploughed his way along, "my fortune's made at last," when, on turning the corner of a street a terrible gust of wind caught him from behind, and Jock, holding bravely on, was dragged along the street at a break-neck pace, his great invention dragging him after it with extraordinary velocity.

"Help! help! shouted Jock, as he flew past a Highland policeman like a visible telegram.

The astonished Bobby dashed after the flying apparition. So, also, did a butcher's dog, which succeeded, after a stiff chase, in pinning Jock by the coat-tail. Jock, however, held firmly on, so did the wind, so did the butcher's dog, and so, also, did the patent umbrella.

In three seconds more Jock was caught clean up off his feet, somewhat to his own surprise, with the butcher's dog clinging to his nether garments. When about a story high, Jock's coat-tail tore clean away, and down came the butcher's dog, with the same in his mouth.

Thus lightened, Jock continued his aerial flight, a graphic illustration of the irreversibility of his grand new "Patent Storm-Proof Umbrella."

Careering over the house-tops, Jock and his umbrella at length descended in an adjacent street. Elated beyond measure with the success of his idea, but not particularly anxious to further test its value, Jock flopped down his umbrella, stuck it under his arm, and having fixed up his remaining coat-tail under his waistcoat, he took his way down the street, and was presently met by the alarmed Highland constable, who was hurrying excitedly up.

"Did you'll teuk notice off and opserve a thief of an umbrella runnin' awa' wi' a man an' a dowg?" frenziedly asked the constable.

"I did," said Jock, "they're awa'—they're awa'—they're awa'——"

"They're awa' whaur? Speak! Tell her!"

"They're awa' wi' the win'—north by north!" said Jock. "They're beyond the Campsie hills by this time, but if ye tak' the first express train to Perth, ye'll maybe catch them on the way." Thus relieved of the constable's presence, Jock strode loftily home, and has since made a gift of his patent umbrella to the Corporation o' Camlachie.

In justice to Jock's genius, however, his faculty of invention is not yet exhausted. He is bringing out at the present time a grand new extra-powerful telescope for bringing into view a policeman when he's wanted! If Jock succeeds in this great novelty, he will have done the public a real service, and will have the honour of having satisfactorily solved one of the most incomprehensible problems of the age.

THE COURTSHIP OF JONATHAN QUIGGS.

JONATHAN QUIGGS was a well-dressed bachelor, of middle age, and select tastes. He was floor-walker in a large drapery establishment, and was particularly attentive to well-dressed young lady customers.

The lady customers—particularly those of an uncertain age—frequently smiled on Quiggs, and the polite Quiggs invariably smiled on them in return. It was his business to do so, as well as his inclination; for Quiggs, although a ripe middle-aged bachelor, had not by any means dismissed from his romantic mind the consideration of matrimony. His mind was highly sentimental in tone, and his heart was quite young, having nothing in common with the iceberg feelings of your theoretical bachelor, whose sawdust heart

has shrunk through disuse into the condition of a dried speldring.

At the same time, it must be admitted that Quiggs had no immediate intention of marriage. He was hopefully waiting his chance, and had been gracefully posing for many years back as a sort of starched and pomaded matrimonial Micawber, on the hopeful look-out for some beautiful heiress, or perhaps a rich young Chancery ward.

But the years were passing on, and the beautiful heiress had not yet turned up, and Jonathan Quiggs still remained an elaborately starched and pomaded bachelor, the jest of young maids, and the hope of old.

Time, however, brings many surprises, and Quiggs, the romantic bachelor of forty-five summers, fell deeply and suddenly in love.

In his younger years, Quiggs had seen and adored numerous beautiful girls; but never, surely, had he ever beheld such a peerless beauty as this! He had often been—well, yes, he would admit it—in love to a certain extent; but never had he been in love like this! He was intoxicated; took to writing poetry; lost his appetite, and went completely off his dinner; but the martyrdom was an exquisite one, and Quiggs daily bloomed, literally bloomed, in flowers, yellow kids, and spotless shirt-front.

But who was the fair enslaver?—the dazzling Venus whose fair face had thus put Quiggs off his quarter-of-a-pound of dinner sausages?

Wilhelmina Rose-ina Mumford was a milliner and dress-maker, who had quite recently taken apartments in a tenement directly opposite Quiggs's bedroom window.

Wilhelmina had a lovely complexion—the rose and the lily combined—and the first accidental glimpse of her, as she sat sewing at her window, had given Quiggs the sensation of a drink of hot treacle. He read his destiny in that single glance—he was in love; he was a candidate for

matrimony; his long-deferred fate was there and then sealed!

The window at which Wilhelmina usually sat at once became a source of indescribable charm to him. It was in Quiggs's eyes the most interesting and special window in the whole street. It was pleasant to look at even in Wilhelmina's absence; but when the loved one sat and sewed there, it was a perfect paradise!

By a process of reasoning easily explainable under the tender circumstances, Quiggs, who loved poetry, found himself hourly repeating Hood's analogous poem of

"OVER THE WAY.

"Alas! the flames of an unhappy lover,
About my heart, and on my vitals prey;
I've caught a fever, and I can't get over,
Over the way!

"My wasted form ought of itself to touch her;
My baker feels my appetite decay;
And as for butcher-meat—oh, she's my butcher!
Over the way!"

In point of fact, Quiggs had quite a severe attack of "over the way," and it brought him into trouble and expense in various ways, besides "over the way."

In the first place, he was fifteenpence extra every week for shirt-fronts, cuffs, and collars, and a good deal more for scent-bottles and hair pomades. Besides, he was compelled —actually compelled—by the warmth of his feelings to purchase a second-hand opera-glass at a cost of 2s. 6d., for the express and sole purpose of bringing the beloved one nearer to him when both were seated at their respective windows.

His appetite for the beautiful, however, was not appeased thereby one whit, but rather grew with what it fed on. So much, indeed, was this the case, that Quiggs's jealousy fairly got the better of his judgment, and his misgivings

were confirmed when one day a rival, as he wildly imagined, suddenly appeared on the scene.

It was a beautiful summer Saturday afternoon, when Nature was robed in her gayest attire. The window flower-boxes were in full-bloom; the city sparrows flitted from house-top to house-top; the street-organs discoursed their sweetest strains; the house-flies buzzed playfully against the window-panes, and all was peaceful, bright, and gay.

Quiggs, sitting at his window on the beautiful afternoon in question, opera-glass in hand, had Wilhelmina delightfully focussed, when, ah! he witnessed—yes, actually witnessed—an elderly person—he wouldn't call him a gentleman—stop right before Wilhelmina's window, and—look up!

Quiggs was horror-stricken. With Othello rising in his breast, he first dashed down his opera-glass, and then dashed down the stair.

In three seconds he had crossed the street, and reached the unconscious Cassio of the play, who was an elderly gentleman, carrying gold spectacles and a silk umbrella.

"Y—y—your business, villain?" seizing the old gentleman by the throat.

"Looking for lodgings!" gasped out the terrified victim.

"Ah, 'tis well!—'tis well I find not Cassio's kisses on her lips!" and loosening his hold of the victim, Quiggs hurried back to his window, and his—opera-glass.

It is needless to remark that the staid old gentleman made instant tracks from the spot, concluding that lunatics were most certainly about, and that unprotected walking in that neighbourhood was extremely dangerous.

In yet another way, Quiggs's "over-the-way" mania brought him into trouble. His daily duty was the onerous one of directing customers of both sexes, but principally the fair sex to the different departments, where their wants would be supplied.

Now, Wilhelmina Rose-ina Mumford was an ever-present fact in Quiggs's mind. Her beautiful shadow haunted him by night and day, and toned his every thought, so that very frequently in replying to questions asked by customers and others as to where such-and-such goods were to be had, Quiggs, wrapped in visions of Wilhelmina sitting sewing at her window, would reply, without hesitation, "Over the way!"

This laconic advice was in several instances construed by customers in a strictly literal sense, who, withdrawing from the premises, effected their purchases, according to instructions, in a flourishing opposition house on the opposite side of the street.

Yes, Wilhelmina was a bewitching fact; and at length poor Quiggs was morally certain that in her, his beautiful ideal, he had at last met his long-delayed fate!

Wilhelmina Rose-ina Mumford!—how he luxuriated in the sonorous cadences of that highly classic name! He knew that was her dear, sweet name; because, had he not read and admired it in secret, a hundred times over, on the close-mouth, where it read in gold letters:—

"MISS WILHELMINA ROSE-INA MUMFORD,
"*Milliner and Dressmaker.*
"1 Stair up."

Wilhelmina was a prize; further delay might be dangerous; villainous Cassios might be about, where so much captivating beauty was thoughtlessly exposed at a front window!

He seriously thought out the position. He had not yet had a formal introduction to Wilhelmina, but there were other ways of reaching the fair one's ears and heart. The post-office was safe and handy; so he resolved to conduct his romantic courtship by letter.

Once decided, Quiggs was neither slow nor bashful in preferring his suit, backed by an immediate offer of his heart and hand:—

"MY DEAREST WILHELMINA ROSE-INA"—(he wrote),—"Were, oh, were you ever loved by a member of the ruder sex? I hope not, although your personal attractions render the wild hope futile. If, however, your charming heart is at present 'to let'—I mean *unoccupied*—kindly, oh kindly say so. For I, Jonathan Quiggs, love you dearly, and have long pined—now three weary weeks!—for the blessing of your hand. Will you, oh, will you, be mine? Tell me by return of post, and meantime accept of these dumb kisses as so many warm tokens of my love [here followed half a pageful of small crosses], and believe me,

"Your devoted adorer,

"JONATHAN QUIGGS.'

Quiggs posted this gushing love-epistle at half-past ten that same night, and next evening, on returning to his lodgings, he found a reply-letter awaiting him. It was a delicious morsel to handle and to look at; for it was encased in a pink envelope, and emitted all the blissful scents of "Araby the blest."

"From Wilhelmina!" he exclaimed, as he slit the top of the envelope with his penknife. "Yes, from darling Wilhelmina!" and delightedly he perused its contents:—

"MY SWEET JONATHAN,—You ask me, was I ever loved by a man, and I reply, 'Yes, I *were!*' by hundreds!—['Ah!' sighed poor Quiggs, 'I too truly guessed so; dreadful! dreadful!']—But I never, never loved one in return, *except you*. [Here Quiggs literally smiled from ear to ear.] You ask me, will I be yours? and I answer, *I will!* My heart, my hand, and my purse are all at your sweet disposal. Name, oh, name the happy day!

"Oh! look not in my eyes love,
They tell a tale too true;
See not my blushes rise, love,
Nor listen to my sighs, love,
For blushes, sighs, and eyes, love,
All speak—all speak for you!

"Yours for ever,

"WILHELMINA ROSE-INA MUMFORD.

(Here followed three pages of small X kisses, and a postscript longer than the letter itself, warning Quiggs to be secret and careful, as she had a dear mamma who was the sworn enemy of all lovers—Jonathan Quiggs included—and who wouldn't on any account, tolerate a single visit.)

"Well, that's certainly comforting!" exclaimed Quiggs. "Assuredly, I have the prospects of a beautiful mother-in-law, with a fine temper, too,—the old Gorgon! But faint heart never yet won fair lady; and I'll carry off my beloved Wilhelmina in spite of her mamma's watchful care. A romantic and spirited elopement instantly put into execution is the proper thing to do. I'll elope with the fair one to-morrow night, taking the express train—to Paisley!"

Thus resolved, Quiggs hastily wrote a second note—a note of secret assignation—in which he warned his Wilhelmina to prepare and hold herself in instant readiness, as he had resolved to elope with her—heart, hand, and purse—on the following night, at eight o'clock prompt!

By way of consent, Wilhelmina sent him over her check-key, so as to facilitate matters on the following fateful evening.

Quiggs was in raptures, and did everything but push round the hands of the clock to hasten on the happy hour of—elopement!

By six o'clock he stood ready, stiff with cuffs, collar, and shirt-front.

When half-past seven came round, he could stand it no longer, and, sticking his hat on his head, he dashed across to Wilhelmina's residence, and presently reached the door.

Without stopping to knock, Quiggs instantly applied the check-key, and presently found himself in a short lobby, and immediately afterwards he stood in the actual presence of his fair enslaver!

Wilhelmina was seated before a small looking-glass, arranging her personal toilet.

"Half-an-hour too soon!" she exclaimed, with a gasp, turning half round on her chair.

Quiggs rushed up and seized her in his fond arms.

Her left cheek was *red*, he saw; her right cheek *white!*

"You blush on the one cheek, my dearest Wilhelmina?"

"The side of my heart, dear? Can you, oh, can you draw an inference?"

"I can, my dear, and a champagne cork, too!" answered Quiggs, and kissing her warmly on the blushing cheek, his lips left a white stain, and—*he thought he smelt paint!*

Just at that perplexing moment, the piercing voice of his prospective mother-in-law was heard crying aloud:—

"Wilhelmina! Wilhelmina! come here instantly!"

"Not this time," cried back the gallant lover; "it's death, or *Paisley!*" And, catching up the fair one in his fond arms, Quiggs rushed blindly down stairs, heedless of the screams of Wilhelmina, who yelled out:—

"Stop! stop! for goodness sake! My leg! my leg!"

"Wh—wh—what's the matter with your leg, dearest?" asked Quiggs, depositing his fair burden against a lamp-post at the close-mouth. "Rheumatism—eh?"

"Oh dear, no!—not that! not that! I've left it in the room—standing against the mantelpiece!" blushed the fair one.

"Ah!" gasped Quiggs, "and your purse, Wilhelmina, your purse?"

"Oh, it's all right; it's here," slapping her dress-pocket.

"How much, dearest?"

"Seventeen and sixpence!" answered the beautiful heiress.

"Seventeen and sixpence, and a wooden leg! Christopher Columbus!"

In less than no time, Quiggs had replaced the fair heiress in her own room, and taken French leave of the premises, with a lot of the romance taken out of his mind.

"Oh, you vile deceiver!—you wolf in sheep's clothing!" the deserted Wilhelmina cried after him; "you miserable sixteen-shilling-a-week counter-louper! Deceived! deceived! deceived! O-ho! o-ho! o-ho!"

But Quiggs went off, and returned not.

Three weeks after he was served with a legal notice of Mumford v. Quiggs, in a breach of promise case, the damages being laid at £500.

Quiggs failed to appear, and a warrant of apprehension was issued against him.

The sheriff's officer went for Quiggs, and Quiggs went to America.

The case is still unsettled; so is Quiggs. Wilhelmina is still unmarried; so is Quiggs. She hopes she may yet catch him; so does Quiggs!

WILLIE WEEDRAP'S DOMESTIC ASTRONOMY.

WILLIE WEEDRAP was a clog-maker in the Sautmarket o Gleska. He was of a highly scientific turn of mind, and was fond of astronomy, and—a dram.

He was a much married man, Willie, but took humorous views of life—married life included—and honestly tried on all occasions to treat domestic differences as he did auld clogs, that is—to speedily mend them.

His wife Betty had a temper as keen as a bit of Sheffield cutlery, and domestic rows were commonly frequent, and not uncommonly high-pitched.

Willie, however, patiently wrocht awa', accepting his fate as a thing that wadna wash oot, like the cross on the cuddy's back. Willie was domestically doon-in-the-mooth a bit;

but there were waur things in life than a nettlesome wife, an' that was—nae wife ava'!

But although only a clog-maker to trade, Willie had a soul in his breast, and nursed in his leisure moments aspirations above leather, and cultivated spheres of thought vastly beyond the circumscribed radius of mere cluggs.

He went boldly in for the study of astronomy assisted by observations taken through an Eighteen-Penny Spy-Glass, and could tell his wondering cronies and customers all about the theory of the planetary system, including the mountains in the moon, and the composition of the sun.

His wife, Betty, however, gave him no encouragement whatever in his moonstruck studies, but rather sat on him as often as he offered to trot out his astronomical craze.

"Leather and science! cluggs an' star studies!" she would contemptuously exclaim; "a fine mixture atweel! Talk about comets' tails, an' sic like; dowgs' tails wad serve ye better, Willie, pittin' aside for the moment the question o' guid clugg leather!"

"Weel, maybe, Betty, maybe; but if ye think I'm to be tied doon to a dowg's tail a' my days, jist like an' auld tin-can, ye're labourin' under a gross mistake, my dear woman; for let me tell ye, yince for a', that I've a soul greatly above dowgs' tails, tanned leather, an' clugg-heels—a soul that rises to the very heavens on the wings o' knowledge; while you—you—you, Betty, were formed by Nature to wear your puddin' head in a mutch, an' plowter awa' a' your days wi' a washin'-cloot, a hearth-broom, an' a black-lead brush!"

After some such lofty tirade as this, Willie, knowing his wife's Sheffield-cutlery temper, would invariably make for the door, and would disappear from the fireside for the rest of the evening, to smoke a pipe an' talk astronomy with a friend over a social gill in the back-room of one of the too numerous local "pubs."

The social dram, indeed, was honest Willie's weak bit—the one vulnerable point in his moral armour which rendered Betty's persecution of him possible, and, so far, justifiable.

Willie, however, stoutly denied the charge of intemperance at all points, declaring that it was Betty's cutting temper that was in the blame, and that a canny, nerve-steadying dram was his only available solace and antidote. And thereby often hung a tale.

Well, one night shortly since, Willie was at a social merry-making in an auld frien's house, the occasion being that of a brother clog-maker's marriage to a third wife—a buxom widow of forty-five summers, who owned an oyster-shop in the Gallowgate.

Willie's wife would not accompany him, "no' having a wise-like bonnet to pit on her heid," as she declared, though Willie saw little wrang wi't; so our hero took the road himself, weighted to the moral scupper-holes with strict injunctions to "mind and be licht on the dram," and to be "sure an' be hame by the ring o' ten."

"A' richt, Betty, my dear," assented Willie, "a' richt I'll no' jist say I'll come strecht hame, as I'm a wee boo'd in the back, ye ken, but I'll dae my level best, Betty—I'll dae my level best."

Once outside his own door, Willie dismissed his wife's injunctions as just so much useless back-balance, and once among his friends and fellow-tradesmen, he was merry in the extreme.

It was eight o'clock in the evening when the marriage party assembled, and, long before the hour of ten, song and sentiment were going the round of the room to the merry squeak of a fiddle.

Willie had sung three times, and now his turn had come round once more, and everybody was impatiently applauding his expected fourth "go"; so, under the inspiration of his seventh glass, our hero rose and said:—

"Ladies and gentlemen,—My next song will be a lecture, an' the subject o' my discourse will be

DOMESTIC ASTRONOMY.

Domestic astronomy is yin o' the grandest o' the sciences, an' bate's cock-fechtin' a' to sticks. (Hear, hear.) It's a remote theme; but the application of its grand and lofty principles to domestic matters is worthy the attention o' every workin'-man wha values harmonic peace and quateness at his ain fireside. Courtship and marriage are baith illustrated in its magnificent laws. (Sensation, and considerable rubbing of specks, and a voice—'The dram's tooken Willie's pow.') In the first place, as the ministers say, the uncertain course o' love has its counterpart in the laws o' attraction an' repulsion that govern the stellar worlds. There is gravitation, or the mutual attraction o' twa opposite bodies, an' that's courtship. (Laughter and applause.) Then, secondly, there's a law o' repulsion in nature, an' that's exemplified in the rejected-lover tragedy. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) Thirdly, there are over-ruling laws o' harmonious concord an' sweet amity in nature, an' that's married life—wi' a hook! (Loud laughter, in the midst of which the lecturer was seen to stick his two thumbs in his vest pockets, and play suggestive piano-notes with his remaining fingers, accompanied by a sustained wink of the left eye.) Furthermore, the heid of the hoose may be fitly likened to the parent sun, the grand centre o' the fireside starry system, an' the bairns the wee planets that revolve aroond him, receiving frae him their light, their life, an' their heat. (Applause, and a voice —'An' the wife, Willie, what aboot her? Is she the mune, or what?') Oh, the wife, the wife!—let me see; she's a —she's a—she's a—a—a disturbin' comet that wad been better left oot o' the programme a' thegither. (Loud laughter from the spectacled husbands, and groans from the married wives all round.) Then, gentlemen, if your mind is harassed wi' care or domestic differences, the contempla-

tion o' the grand starry worlds, aided by a guid-gaun pipe, soothes the troubled mind, as a linseed poultice daes a sair finger. Man, proud man, looks wee in comparison wi' the starry universe; an' woman—wee'r! (Hear, hear, from the married men.) Then, fourthly, there's the unknown composition o' the sun. (A voice—'Ay, that's a fizzer! What's it like, Willie?') It's like the composition o' a woman's mind—mystery, contradiction, and incomprehensibility. (Angry protestations from the married wives, and laughter all round.) But maybe, gentlemen, after a', like the sun himsel', we couldna dae vera weel withoot the women folks. It's a ticklish question, an' I'll leave every married man to decide it for himsel'. (Hear, hear, and ironical cheers.) Weel, to cairry on the analogy a bit farrer, there's, in conclusion, the November meteors—the 'shooting stars, as they're commonly ca'd. Noo, what possible domestic use, think ye, can they be applied to? (A voice—'Kitchen coals.') Better than that. Noo listen, married men, for what I'm gaun to say vitally affects your interests an' domestic peace o' mind. It's said that nae less than fowr hunder an' fifty thoosand meteoric stanes fa' frae the heavens an' strike this earth every day during the year. Noo, it stan's to reason that if oor wives were instructed in elementary astronomy, then, when a fellow cam' hame frae a spree, wi' a wee drap in his e'e, alang wi' a cut heid an' a badly-damaged hat, an' tell't his flytin' wife that he was struck by a meteor, she wad certainly believe him. There's no a doubt o't. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) But apairt frae an' above a' mere theoretical applications, the study o' astronomy is the best domestic salve an' comfort a man can have, for it tak's him oot o' himsel', an enables him to fling aff, as he wad his topcoat, a' petty annoyances—including the taxes, the rent-day, and the Sheffield-cutlery temper of a nettlesome wife." (Loud and continued applause, during which the ingenious lecturer resumed his seat.)

Willie's amusing lecture was pronounced the event of the evening, and thereafter the general fun went so very merrily, that it was well on for the " wee short hour ayont the twal' " before he thought of rising.

And when at last he did take the road for home, he was in a state of elevation nearly equal to that of the shining stars overhead.

But great as was our hero's mental elevation, he could not rise above the dread of his wife Betty, who he had good reason to fear was waiting for his return, armed with a sentiment of just wrath, a tattie-beetle in her right-hand, and a Sheffield-cutlery lecture, twa yards in length, on the neb o' her stinging tongue.

" O ! Willie, Willie ! " he muttered to himself, as he stotted hame, " what'll your wife Betty say to you this nicht when ye set fit inside your ain door ? Ten by the ring o' the clock was to see ye hame, and there's the toon-bells ringing twa o' the mornin' ! Gosh, but I'll cop't frae the wife this nicht, as sure as clugg-heels are airn. Talk aboot astronomy ! It'll be tangs-an'-poker-onomy for me when I reach hame, I fear. Ow ! what's that—what's gane wrang ? "

This latter exclamation was forcibly expelled from our hero by a pitch-in he had with something stiff, straight, and unyielding as a stone-wall.

He looked up stupefied for the moment, and saw that he had collided with a lamp-post.

He felt his head, and it *felt* bad. He had looked at his felt hat, and it both *looked* and *felt* bad.

" My heid's naething—it'll mend in a day or twa,' he muttered to himself, considerably sobered by the collision. " But what'll Betty say to my staved-in hat ? And it a split-new yin tae ! But stop ! I have it ! I'll apply the principles o' my ain lecture on domestic astronomy, an' tell her I was struck by a falling meteor. If she disna believe it, assisted by the evidence o' her ain twa een, as exemplified

in my cut broo and my badly-damaged hat, she micht dae't, that's a' I'll say."

Thus resolved, our hero stotted on, laughing up his sleeve at the device he had so ingeniously resolved on adopting, hoping and mentally praying for its success.

In a few minutes, rap-tap, tirr-rap! went his knuckles on the door, and presently his angry better-half appeared at the door, a nicht-mutch on her head, and wrath written in capital letters on her countenance.

"It's you, ye thochtless ne'er-do-weel! What kin' o' conduct's this, Willie Weedrap? At your auld tricks again! comin' hame frae your merry-meetings at twa in the mornin' as fou's the Clyde in spate! Eh, mercy me! what a hat! an' what a pair o' black een! Whaur, in a' the earth, ha'e ye been, sir; tell me this vera instant?"

"Stop! stop! Betty, my dear; dinna let your temper rin awa' wi' your judgment; it's a' richt, as richt's the mail. Gi'e me a moment's breathing grace, an' I'll explain the matter wi' the speed o' a sixpenny telegram. My hat's bash't awee, it's true, an' so is my heid [tenderly fingering the organ of Benevolence], no' to mention my twa 'keekers.' But I can explain a'—explain a', Betty."

"So can I, Willie. I can explain't a' tae. Ye're fou! an' that explains everything!"

"No, no, Betty, my dear; as sure's ye're staunin' there, I havena tasted twa 'half-yins' since I left the hoose! (In an *aside:* They were a' hale yins.) But the fact is, Betty, I was struck on the heid the nicht wi' a meteoric stane!"

"A meteoric stane, Willie?"

"It's a fack's ye're there!"

"A meteoric stane, ?"

"Ay, Betty, a falling star, ye ken. See, there's the evidence o't; jist look at the condition o' that hat; it speaks eloquently for itsel', if no' for my theory. It's a mercy I'm a leevin' man this minute! It was a sair whack on the

napper I got, I can tell ye" (fingering the crown of his head).

"A falling star, Willie, did ye say?"

"Ay, a falling star, Betty! Did ye no' read in the *Weekly Mail* the ither day aboot a hale shoo'er o' them?"

"I daursay I did, noo that I bethink mysel' a wee. An' dae ye mean to stan' there, an' tell me to my face, that you were struck on the heid the nicht by a falling star?"

"Faith, Betty, my dear, baith my hat an' my heid ken that this minute. They were comin' doon as thick as hail-stanes; the Trongate's fu' o' them. We're passin' through the tail o' a comet the noo, ye ken, an' that accoonts for the phenomenon!"

"An' could ye no' put up your umbrella, Willie?"

"That's exactly whaur I was tooken short, Betty—the want o' an umbrella. I was storm-sted in a close at the heid o' the Sautmarket for better than twa hours; an' when, thinkin' on you, Betty dear, I did at last venture oot, I was struck doon before I had coonted twenty paces."

"Eh, me! what's things comin' to, I wonder? It's surely near the end o' the world. An' was there nae accidents happened to life an' limb besides your ain mishap, Willie?"

"Accidents, Betty dear? Ay, faith, lots o' them! The Sautmarket's fu' o' deid policemen. Jist wait till ye see the newspapers the morn!"

"Eh, Willie! it's a fair mercy ye're a leevin' man this nicht. What a pity ye didna think o' takin' an umbrella wi' ye; there's an auld yin below the bed there that a hale street could hide in."

"Weel, I'll try an' mind that next November, Betty; in the meantime, squeeze back that damaged hat into something like Christian shape, an' syne mak' a cauld-watter poultice for the croon o' my heid; for the fell crack I got on my napper this nicht is like to be the death o' me. It's gowpen like a puddock's jump; an' my twa blessed lugs

have been singin' 'Paddy Whack, the Piper,' ever since I got the murderin' skelp."

"Ay, Willie, but listen awee. Meteroic stanes here, or meteoric stanes there, the vera best cauld-watter poultice an' protecting umbrella-cover ye can get for your heid between this and the next November starry stane-battle, is jist the *the signin' o' the teetotal pledge!* That umbrella protecting ye, ye may safely whistle—'What's a' the steer, kimmer?' an' blaw rain, blaw snaw, ye'll then come hame as hale in baith hat an' heid as a dooce kirk-elder returning frae a Presbytery meeting. The meteoric theory 'ill no' haud watter, Willie; it let's oot at baith ends. The meteor that knocked ye doon the nicht was jist the wee mischief-workin' gill-stowp. It cowp't you, as it has often cowp't mony a stronger man. Sae, the vera best thing ye can dae, Willie, is to firmly pit in the pin, an' laying astronomy aside, stick like glue to the makin' an' mendin' o' cluggs."

"But think, Betty, only think for a moment on the lofty music of the rolling spheres!"

"The music o' the rollin' spheres! H'm! there's better music in the hamely tramp o' a pair o' guid airn-shod cluggs ony day."

"Weel, that's at least guid, sensible domestic astronomy onyway, Betty, if it's no science; an' I'll no' say but ye may be richt, after a'. Ye've gotten haud o' the best end o' the stick onyway; for you've got, like a true woman, the last word, an' I've got—a splittin' headache."

THE STAIRHEID MANAWDGE.

Every Scottish housewife of the working-class order knows what a manawdge is; but for the information of all and sundry, a Stairheid Manawdge may be explained as a sort of

fireside accommodation bank, into which weekly payments are made and which is conducted on lottery principles in the "drawing" for the accumulated money. The manawdge may include all the housewives in a certain tenement, or may, for that matter of it, extend its operations so as to include a whole district. Thus, if ten housewives agree to pay in to the manawdge wife, say 2s. per week, that puts at her disposal a weekly bonus of £1, which is to be drawn for by lottery—priority in the use of the money being regarded as a stroke of good fortune. "Contributions" and "draws" are thus made every week, until each member of the small circle of financial investors has been paid out in full, the transaction repeating itself as often as the investors wish.

Mrs. Gruppy was a manawdge wife who had considerable experience in the business. She was a sort of accepted stair-head banker and chancellor of the local exchequer.

She was a most managing woman, Mrs. Gruppy, and managed among other feats, to live on the profits of her numerous little money transactions with her neighbours. Her man had been a sodger in his youth, and had lost his left leg at the battle of the Alma, for which mishap he was granted a Government pension, and a widden leg. The said leg was not much to walk with, but when its owner got drunk—which happened every "pension day"—it evinced a vicious propensity for kicking, as Mrs. Gruppy knew to her cost. Fireside fechts were thus of frequent occurrence, but the advantage was never long on the side of the sodger; for Mrs. Gruppy, watching her chance, would quickly bear down point-blank on the enemy, seize and screw aff the widden leg and hide it below the bed, or "plank" it on the highest shelf in the house, leaving the one-legged hero to hop about the floor like a hen on a rainy day, or to tumble into bed and sleep aff the drink, while she was busy "rypin' his pooches" for the melancholy remains of his pension-money.

In addition to her other transactions, Mrs. Gruppy was

reputed to sell a wee drap on the sly to drouthy housewives especially on the Monday mornings when the manawdge was met. But ye couldna ca 't a sheebeen. Oh, no! It was merely to accommodate the neebors that Mrs. Gruppy kept a twa-gallon jar in her benmost press, and for nae other purpose. Oh, no!

Monday mornings were the paying and "drawing" days in Mrs. Gruppy's assembled circle, and the scene I have to depict relates to one of these interesting Monday mornings, as witnessed in the manawdge wife's house.

Mrs. Gruppy's domestic domicile was an airy one-roomed garret, four stairs up, the last yin, like her man's left leg, being a widden yin, which skrecht and whussle't under the feet like disordered fiddle-strings.

It was ten o'clock by the ring of the little Swiss clock that wagged industriously against the kitchen wall. Business was in near prospect, and Mrs. Gruppy was knittin' by the fireside, waiting with expectancy the first welcome "rap" at the door.

Presently, a heavy step was heard ascending the top-stair, which creaked and screamed aloud under the extra pressure with startling distinctness.

"Eh," quoth Mrs. Gruppy to herself, "I ken fine wha's this comin'; it's auld Kirsty, the tripe-wife. Oh, I jist hate the wearisome pech o' her. She's a fair palaver o' a woman and never weary bummin' aboot her stootness o' body, an' her want o' breath. I'm fair sick o' baith her an' her bodily troubles. But here she comes, blawin' like a blast-furnace. Welcome, Kirsty; come awa' in; I'm rale glad to see ye—hopin' ye're as weel's I'd like ye to be, an' then ye'll dae!"

"Eh, Mrs. Gruppy—(pech)—thir awfu' stairs o' yours!—(pech)—I declare, I 'm fair knockit clean oot o' breath—eh, me!—(pech). It's nae ord'nary wark to yin o' my stootness o' body—(pech)—an' shortness o' breath, I can tell ye—eh,

sirs-the-day !—(pech). Is—is—is there onything in the jar, Mrs. Gruppy ?"

"Weel, Kirsty, my woman, that's mair than I'm strictly aware o', but I hope there's a thimblefu' left for you." And without further waste of words, Mrs. Gruppy went over to the cupboard and took out the jar.

"Hoo much, Kirsty, my dear ?"

"Oh, jist say a nate sixpence worth—that's a taste to the piece o' us before the folks gather."

"Oh, ye ken, Kirsty, lass, I dinna taste—unless wi' a frien'."

"An' am I no' a frien', Mrs. Gruppy ?"

"I would like to ken wha wad daur to say ye wisna ! Ay, an' a rale particular frien' tae," promptly replied Mrs. Gruppy, pouring a portion of the spirits into a tea-cup, and handing it to the tripe-wife. "Yes, Kirsty, I'll taste wi' you when I wadna consent to dae't wi' anither. Here's your vera guid health, Kirsty, wishing the tripe-trade prosperity, an' yersel' every comfort !"

"The same to you, Mrs. Gruppy ; an' lang may ye mak' the bawbees clink. (Drinks.) Eh, me, that's refreshin' ! D'ye ken, Mrs. Gruppy, I fair thocht I wad hae lost my heart a'thegither, comin' up thir awfu' stairs o' yours ; I'm sae plaguey stoot, ye see—although I was yince on a time jimp enough aboot the waist, though ye maybe wadna think it."

"What ! Kirsty, is that the rale truth ye're tellin' me ? —*you* thin !"

"Ay ! me thin, Mrs. Gruppy, muckle as it surprises ye to hear't. I never grew stoot till I got married."

"That's the way wi' the maist o' us women folks, Kirsty. But here comes auld Mrs. Toddler frae the street-fit. Glad to see ye, Mrs. Toddler ; come awa' ben."

Mrs. Toddler sat down with a pleased smile, and was quickly succeeded in that act by Mrs. Haiver, a talkative body, from the stairhead below.

In a few minutes further additions were made to the graphic circle, in the persons of Peggy Gundy, the glessie-wife, and young Mrs. Safty, a newcomer to the tenement.

Salutations were freely exchanged, in that particularly homely style so very characteristic of the auld-fashioned, west-of-Scotland housewife.

By-and-by, Mrs. Snappy, the baker's wife, came in, in a sort o' hurry, as if she was fear't she would lose something if she didna rin for't.

She was quickly followed by Washin'-Maggie, as she was commonly called, who was "cleaner" in general for the whole district, and washer-wife for Mrs. Gruppy's manawdge-circle in particular.

Other arrivals speedily succeeded, and Mrs. Gruppy's house before long was as ringing fu' o' clatter as a boat-yard on the Clyde.

Mrs. Haiver, who always had a lot to say, and who usually spoke with her eyes half shut, like one in a trance, proceeded to assure the circle, with great gravity of voice, that she had just "gotten her man oot to his wark that mornin' after a twa-weeks' complicated attack o' short-time an' naething to dae." And "richt thankfu' she was," she said, "to hae the fireside yince mair to hersel', wi a week's full pey in prospect. It was a blessin' to be thankfu' for baith ways."

Mrs. Snappy, the baker's charmer, next threw a bomb among them, by prophesying a hap'ney on the loaf before this time next month, if no three-fardins!

"A hap'ney on the loaf!" exclaimed the whole circle in chorus.

"Eh, me!" said Mrs. Toddler, "what's things comin' to? It'll be naething for us puir women folks noo but turning oor auld bonnets into new yins for twa years to come: wiser-like they'd put the hap'ney on the unce o' tobacco."

"Ye're aboot richt there, Mrs. Toddler," put in Kirsty,

the tripe-wife; "at the same time, folks are no bound to exist on flour-bread a'thegither. The Scripters say—'Man shall not live by bread alone.'"

"N—no," retorted the baker's wife, who accepted the remark as a gentle cut at loaf-bread in general and herself in particular; "wantin' the bit loaf, we could, of course, fa' back on biled tripe!"

A general laugh was the answer, and Mrs. Snappy rather believed in her own mind that she had effectually shut-up the tripe-wife and her Scriptural quotation as well.

"Weel, weel, leddies, there's waur than a jug o' guid tripe," said the manawdge wife, with a mollifying laugh. "What think you, Mrs. Safty?"

"Me? I think I'll need to hurry doon the stair, for I've left my wean sleepin' in the cradle, an' if yon big Irish bowl-wife comes rappin' to my door, she'll no leave aff till she has the wean up."

"In that case, ye'd maybe better pey up an' draw, leddies," said the manawdge wife, placing her lottery-bag on the table.

The request was at once acted on. Small squares of paper, bearing the names of each member of the circle, were thrown promiscuously into a green cloth bag, and the bag, having been well shaken, like a doctor's bottle, Washer-Maggie was deputed to draw.

She consented, with a smile which connected her two ears with her mouth, and putting her hand into the bag, she pulled forth a piece of paper bearing the name of—Mrs. Safty!

"Eh, me! the lucky woman!" sang out the whole party; "a paper pound in her hand, nae less!"

"Noo, noo, Mrs. Safty," began the manawdge wife, with persuasive manner, "ye're no' to be rinnin' awa' as fast ye can wi' a hale pound-note in your hand, an' an exkase on your tongue aboot a waukrife wean in the cradle. Ye maun be neiborly, an' stan' a bit treat a' roond."

"Of course she will; an' withoot coaxin' tae," put in the baker's better-half. "It's the custom, ye ken, Mrs Safty."

"An' ye maunna be odd, or mair stickin' than your neibors," added the manawdge wife, producing at the same instant the whisky jar. "Is't to be glasses roond, Mrs. Safty?"

"Weel, I suppose sae—if that's the standin' rule," said Mrs. Safty.

"Oh, yes!" replied the lot in one unanimous voice.

So the twa-gallon whisky jar was brought out, and very soon any amount of cups were clinking on the table.

"Your verra guid health, Mrs. Safty!" was thereupon the order of the evening; "no' forgettin' yours, Mrs. Gruppy, an' yours, Mrs. Snappy! an' yours!—an' yours!—an' yours!" And so on, round the merry circle the dram went, till they had emptied the manawdge wife's whisky jar, and drank twelve shillings' worth of simple Mrs. Safty's pound-note.

"That's you an' me clear," said the manawdge wife, as she returned back Mrs. Safty her change; "an' thank you very much, Mrs. Safty."

Mrs. Safty took the money, and made for the door, remarking that she would now have "to rin," as she had to go into "the toon" to buy a bit fresh meat for her husband's dinner.

"A word wi' you, Mrs. Safty," said the baker's wife, "jist one word wi' you before ye gang. Dinna ye feed up your man wi' butcher meat; it's no proper feedin' for a workin' man. A plate o' ham an' eggs is needed for yoursel', but if ye want to get the upper hand o' your man, like ither clever hoosewives, feed him on parritch. If he kicks at parritch, try him wi' pease-brose. They're baith fine, cheap, economical dishes, an', ma certie, they tak' the upsettin' spunk oot o' the men!"

Having been primed with this advice, young Mrs. Safty was allowed to depart.

"She's a rale nice bit buddy that," remarked Mrs. Toddler. "I maun ken her better than I dae."

"She's saft awee," said the manawdge wife, "an' has a lot to learn yet, puir thing. Her man can rowe her roond his thoomb, jist like that."

"I wad alloo nae man to rowe me roond his thoomb," said the baker's charmer.

"Nor me either," added the washer-wife; "the women think owre muckle o' the men, an' faur owre little o' themselves. I mind the day my man was carried hame to me on a shutter, wi' a broken leg. I was washin' that day, as usual, when yin o' his fellow workmen said to me, wi' a frichtsome lang face:

"'I have a most painful duty to perform, my good woman. Your husband——'

"'He'll be on the spree again, I suppose?'

"'No, my good woman, he 's——'

"'Got lockit up in jail again, I'll be bound?'

"'No, no; he has had the misfortune to fall from a scaffold, and has broken his left leg.'

"'An', confound your nonsense, what gar'd ye come here frichtin' folks in that way, makin' a buddy think that something had happened. Bring him hame, an' tak' care that naething fa's oot o' his pooches.' That's what I tell't them. H'm, makin' a sang aboot naething."

"But the men-folks have sic wheedlin' ways wi' them," put in Mrs. Haiver; "for instance, there's oor John"—(here all the listeners began to cough in concert, knowing from experience that when once Mrs. Haiver trotted oot "oor John," it was domino with all the others, so far as getting in a word was concerned)—"ay, there's oor John, as I was jist sayin'; he has the awfu'est treacley tongue in his heid ever ye kenn'd; it's as sweet as sugar whiles, an' could wile the

vera bird aff the tree. I mind fine o' the nicht he popped the question" (went on Mrs. Haiver, oblivious to the fact that the neibors were already rising and leaving the room, one after the other). "It was a bonnie, bonnie munelicht nicht, an' we were baith sittin' an' sighin' on an auld cairt-wheel before the smith's shop."

"'Katie,' says he, wi' a love-sick sigh, an' a look on his face as pathetic as a thrupenny finnan haddie; 'Katie, my dear.'

"'What?' says I, quite innocent-like, never jalousin' for one moment what the man meant.

"'Will ye be mine?' an' syne he kissed me sae ten erly. (He had been eatin' a saut herrin', but that's neither here nor there.)

"Weel, d'ye ken," resumed Mrs. Haiver, "I coodna in my heart say 'No,' if I had been shot for't. An' mind ye, I had lots o' grand offers on hand at the time. I had yin frae worthy auld Mr. Geography, the village schulemaister. He was in a weel-daein' way, Mr. Geography, an' cood speak grammar as easily as I cood knit a stockin'. Mair than that, a mate in yin o' the canal-boats was jist fair daft for me. An' a fine braw fellow he looked, wi' his sou'-wester an' his pilot-jacket on. But I was aye of a vera nervous habit, an' never cood have made a canal-boatman's wife. Oh, no. Every time I heard the win' beginning to rise, I wad have been thinking on my puir sailor laddie tossing on the raging main—no' to mention the danger o his boat colliding wi' a canal-brig on dark nichts, or the tow-rope snappin' in twa. Oh, no; I never, never wad have dune for a sailor's wife—never! An' then, my third lover. He was a tailor lad—Lang Jaik-jag-the-Flae they ca'd him. Eh, but he was a clean-limbed, soople-jointed, licht-hearted, cahouchie-heeled chappie, the tailor lad. He cood threid a needle jist like *that!* an' as for shooin' up the legs o' a pair o' troosers, it was fair electricity."

"Stop! stop! Mrs. Haiver," here put in the manawdge wife; "d'ye no' see the neibors have a' left you an' 'John' baith to your pleasure?—they're awa' doon the stairs three minutes ago."

"Preserve me; so they are!" exclaimed Mrs. Haiver, lifting her eyes from the floor, and looking about with a dazed expression of countenance. "Weel, I'll e'en need to toddle like the rest. Your ta, the noo, Mrs. Gruppy; I'm awa'; for if oor John comes hame an' finds me oot, an' the fire in a similar condition, he'll gang clean distracted. Ta-ta!"

WEE BOBBIE BAREFEET.

Wee Bobbie Barefeet was an orphan laddie, wha lived wi' his granny. He was a rale wee city Arab, who had a natural genius for plunkin' the schule, harryin' birds' nests, and raisin' slides on the pavement in the winter time.

Bobbie was just ten years of age come Martinmas, and rejoiced in open-air freedom, and a small daily independency acquired by selling the earliest and latest editions of the evening newspapers.

Up till the date of our story, Bobbie had successfully eluded anything more than a very irregular, and, what the spectacled School Board considered, a highly informal attendance at school.

Bobbie's progress at school had thus been very slow, and he had never got beyond the plain line of reading existing in the "High Sevenpenny." Grammar was a mysterious conundrum to Bobbie, and his knowledge of geography was limited to the street in which he lived, and the alleys adjoining it. Spelling was confusion to him; and, in the matter of

writing he was wofully behind. As a latest effort in writing, he had done a copy-book of German text, the more promising pages of which looked as if a half-drowned fly, just escaped from an ink-bottle, had incontinently crawled across the surface of the paper. Then, as for arithmetic, figures were always a terribly trying task to Bobbie. In fact, Bobbie had not in any way a genius for figures, although, it must be admitted, he was a smart hand at counting out ".change back" for a sixpence, to all such customers as purchased an evening newspaper off his hands. Daily practice in that matter had brought about perfection, but as for figures on a school-slate, Bobbie always sat down to the terrible task like a sick child making wry faces at medicine. And at length when he had struggled through Simple Addition, and graduated into the profounder mysteries of Subtraction, he one day applied the principle at issue to his own small case, and cleverly subtracted himself from the grasp of a School-Board officer, who had actually caught him playing on the pavement during school hours.

School Board officers and policemen, in fact, were the two terrors of Bobbie's innocent life. The policeman he knew little of by his proper name; but he was familiar with him as "the Nick," "the Slop," "the Scufter," and "the Bobby," and the glance of a policeman's buttons coming suddenly round a street-corner, was sufficient to scatter like stour a stiff game at the "bools," or an exciting throw-up at pitch-and-toss, at both of which amusements Bobbie was an experienced adept.

As for the dreaded officers of the local School Board, Bobbie simply spoke of them in the lump as the "Schule-Board," and the cry of "The Schule-Board—there's the Schule-Board Man!" was sufficient at any moment to make Bobbie leap three feet into the air, and bound away from the spot like a young antelope.

When the officer of the district looked Bobbie up, which

occurred almost daily for a time, Bobbie was usually out; and when by accident he happened to be in, he was invariably out also—in the sense that the instant the dread official voice was heard at the door, the kitchen-window, which opened on a back court, stood Bobbie handy, and through it he would instantly go, with the precision of a clown doing the disappearing leap at a pantomime. The next moment he was down the close, and flying away along the street at full speed, to escape the clutches of the terrible Schule-Board Man!

In this way, as may be readily understood, Bobbie's very existence, by and by, came to be almost officially forgotten, when one day, while he was merrily propelling himself along the street by a series of side-somersaults, making his little body gyrate along the pavement like an animated wheel, he was suddenly confronted by a spectacled and very important-looking School-Board officer, who seized him with a sort of official snap, as if he felt assured that he had at length made such a clever capture as would assuredly gain him promotion with the Board—if not, indeed, public thanks.

The incident happened thus: Bobbie that morning had just demolished his bowl of porridge, and having washed his face at a street-pump, he began revolving himself along the pavement as described, hand over hand, like a self-acting wheel, singing aloud—

> "A, B, buff,
> Gi'e the maister a cuff;
> Gi'e him yin, gi'e him twa,
> Knock his heid against the wa',"

when, horror of horrors! on recovering his equilibrium, he found that he had unwittingly plunged right into the grasp of the dreaded School-Board Man!

"Hillo! my fine boy; what school are you attending—eh?"

"Oh, it wisna me, sir; as sure as death I wisna daein' onything; let me awa' an' I'll never say't again!"

"Ay, ay, a very likely story; and what's your name, boy?"

"My name?"

"Yes; what do they call you?"

"Bobbie, sir,"

"Bobbie what?"

"N—no; it's no Bobbie What; it's jist Bobbie they ca' me—that's a.'"

"And where do you live, boy?"

"Roun' the corner, sir.'

"And what's your father's name, boy?"

"M—m—my faither's name, sir?"

"Yes, boy; what is your father's name?"

"I never had nae faither."

"Your mother's name, then?"

"I never had a mither naither."

"What! never—had—a—mother, boy?"

"Na; as sure's death, sir—my granny's my mither."

"Oh, yes, yes; I understand your meaning, boy; you're what's called an orphan—is that it?"

"An orphan, sir?"

"Yes, an orphan laddie, of course."

"Na; I'm a Gleska laddie."

"Tuts, tuts! And how does your grandmother do then?"

"She's quite weel the noo."

"Oh, nonsense, boy; I mean what occupation does she follow?"

"She's—she's—she's——"

"Well, yes, boy; answer my question: she's a what?"

"She's—she's—she's——"

"Come now, boy, answer the question: What does your grandmother do? She's a what—eh?"

"She's a—she's a—she's a candyman, sir."

"A—a—a candyman ?—your grandmother a candyman ?"

"Ay; for when auld Candyman Jock dee't, his widow sell't my granny his hand-barrow, alang wi' the guidwill o' the bisness for 9½d., payable in weekly instalments."

"Then your grandmother really wheels a candy barrow, boy ?"

"Ay, an' she keeps awfu' guid glessie."

"Do you know who made you, boy ?"

"Made *me ?*" (scratching his head distractedly).

"Yes, you ; who made you ?"

"If it's my claes ye mean, my granny made them doon for me."

"What deplorable ignorance!" exclaimed the officer.

"Were you ever at school, boy ?"

"Ay."

"You're quite sure of that now ?"

"As sure as death, sir."

"What reading-book was you in ?"

"The 'High Sevenpenny.'"

"Can you write ?"

"Ay."

"What length were you in writing ?"

"I gaed through *whups, strokes,* an' *big text.*"

"And you can count a bit, of course ?"

"Y—y—yes, sir."

"What length in figures were you ?"

"Distraction, sir."

"*Sub*traction, you mean, of course ?"

"Ay, Distraction," persisted Bobbie.

"Well, Bobbie, my boy, answer me this—take one from two, and how many's left. Now, take time and think it well out ; take one from two, and how many's left ?"

Bobbie vigorously scratched his touzie head with both hands, as if undergoing acute mental distress. The proposition seemed to fairly stagger him for a moment. Then his

eyes showed a gleam of merry light, as if an idea had taken acute inspirational possession of him. Glancing straight ahead to see if the way was clear, he exclaimed—

"Tak' yin frae twa, an' there's *yin left*, an' that's *you!*" and giving his small body a sudden, eel-like twist, he swung himself free of the officer's grasp in a moment, and was presently bounding away along the street at a high-rate of speed in the direction of—freedom!

And that outwitted School-Board officer dashed madly after him, with a word of anger on his lips, and a prophecy in his mind that he would speedily recapture and bring to book the long-headed little rogue; but—he hasn't caught him just yet!

LAMPLICHTER DAVIE'S LOVE AFFAIR.

WEE Davie Lamp was originally a handloom-weaver to trade, but was latterly a lamplichter through necessity. He wrocht the heddles and treddles as long as they supported him in a humble way, but when his earnings had fallen as low as seven shillings and sixpence a-week, and his morning porridge had become attenuated to the drumliness of Clyde water, Davie very wisely concluded that it was about time he was seeking a change of occupation.

Davie, therefore, applied for a situation as a city lamplichter, at the handsome salary of twelve shillings a-week. His application was backed by the influence of three Bailies, five Town Councillors, thirty-six Ward Committee signatures, and two hundred weight of valuable testimonials.

He got the job. A city lamplichter! There was dignity in the very name of it—at least, so thought Mrs. Lamp, Davie's better-twa-thirds, who was proud to tell all her en-

vious neighbours that "Oor Davie was nae langer a puir, half-starved weaverty-waverty, but was now a City Lamplichter, nae less!"

"Haud yer tongue, Mrs. Lamp," said Mrs. Toddle-Bonnie when she first heard of it; "ye dinna mean to tell me that your Davie's gotten on to the Toon Cooncil—eh?"

"It's as true's ye're there, Mrs. Toddle-Bonnie," replied Mrs. Lamp, with a proud toss of her mutch-strings.

"An' will Davie wear a cock't-hat like a' the ither Toon Cooncil bodies?" further questioned Mrs. Toddle-Bonnie.

"Weel, I'll no say for the cock't-hat; but he's to get a hand-lamp, an' a skippet bonnet wi' a red band roond it, onyway."

"Eh, me, Mrs. Lamp! job's o' that kind gaun aboot, an' oor Tam gaun idle! Is there ony mair vawcancies think ye, Mrs. Lamp?"

"What!—is your Tam still gaun idle, Mrs. Toddle-Bonnie?"

"Ay, Mrs. Lamp, he's still gaun idle; an', what's waur, he's got an inflammation in his twa een wi' gaun aboot the toon lookin' for wark! Could your Davie no pit in a word for him at the Cooncil, think ye?"

"Weel, I'll mention't to Davie, Mrs. Toddle-Bonnie, I'll mention't to oor Davie; but, mind ye, Tam 'll need to be highly recommended an' testimonified; for it's a purely patronage job, an', like kissin', it maistly gangs by favour."

But if Davie's wife was well pleased with his grand new civic appointment, Davie himself was still more so. He was elated beyond measure, and felt quite proud of himself when attired in his semi-official clothes, not to speak of his lichted lamp—a shining symbol of modern *enlightenment* and civilisation.

Davie's first experience was to light the stair-gases at night, and put them out in the morning. After a necessary apprenticeship at this preliminary job, he hoped to be promoted in time to the responsible dignity of carrying a patent

"stick" for lighting the street-lamps, which would obviate the necessity of "humphing" about a ladder and a hand-lamp, which, of course, he was required to do in the lighting of the stair gases.

"Meantime, however, after an approved three months' experience of stair-gas lighting, Davie was promoted to the onerous post of a street-lamp cleaner, with a gratifying advance of a shilling a-week.

Davie's experiences in this new phase of his career were varied, and occasionally picturesque in the extreme. Sometimes his ladder would get "fankled" in the crowd, as he hurried along the street. This was a common experience, and frequently brought about quite frightful results; for, on such occasions, Davie, on turning round to apologise, would instantly knock off the hats of six or eight citizens before the astonished owners could get out of the way.

But, bad as those street-accidents were, the numerous "fa's aff the ladder" which he suffered, were decidedly the worst mishaps he had to endure.

Once he fell slap across a baker's "brod," and badly fractured the man of flour beneath it. On another striking occasion, he crushed into momentary unconsciousness a speculative Quaker, who, on recovering his equilibrium and his senses, said—"Friend! I am a man of peace; go, and joke no more!" While, on a third memorable occasion—missing his man this time—Davie "lichted" on his left leg, and permanently shortened that useful bodily member by fully three inches.

The most extraordinary incident that befel him in this connection, however, remains to be told.

Davie had been out as usual doing his lamp-cleaning turn, and was just finishing his afternoon's work, when the ladder on which he was mounted was forcibly run into by a local Salvationist preacher, a certain Captain Hallelujah, the commandant of the district Salvation Army Corps.

Now the Captain happened to be mentally wrestling for

a special "sign" just at the moment of colliding with Davie's ladder, and as Davie fell plump across his shoulders, the Salvationist shouted, "Hallelujah!" and instantly hurried off to the local Barracks, with the special "sign," in the shape of Davie, clinging to his pious back.

Arrived at the Barracks, the Captain rushed into the hall, and deposited Davie on the platform in sight ot the whole audience.

Recovering his feet and suspended senses at the same instant, Davie expostulated aloud, and struggled to free himself, but the energetic captain stuck to his man, and in few words explained, that while coming along to the Barracks, he had wrestled like Jacob of old for a "sign," and the devil had sent him this unruly heathen. He suggested that every member of the rank and file of the Army should fire a salute over the culprit, and send him home converted.

"Not for Davie!" shouted out the alarmed captive, who imagined that he was about to be shot dead on the spot, "not for Davie!" and, with one splendid leap, he cleared the platform, and escaped to the street before the Salvation platoon had time to cover him with their spiritual rifles.

But Davie's last noteworthy experience was of a still more comic character, and very nearly dragged him into a complex breach of promise case.

The incident came about thus: On one of the stair-heads in Davie's beat, lived an auld maid, named Miss Peggy Peppermint Draps.

Now Miss Peggy was a blooming maiden on the sunny side of sixty, who had, of course, refused hundreds of eligible offers in her day.

One night Davie met her on the stair, and by way of courtesy he remarked—

"It's a cauld nicht this, m'em."

Miss Peggy answered that it was a "rale cauld nicht, indeed," and smiled on Davie with quite juicy sweetness

Next night, when Davie's fit was heard lampin' up the stair, Miss Peggy opened her door, and handed him a cup of warm tea.

Davie, agreeably surprised, drank the warm tea, and briefly thanked her.

On the third night, however, things were brought to an acute crisis by Miss Peggy bestowing a heart-melting look on Davie, and saying to him—

"David, things are growing serious between you and me. When, oh when, is it to be?"

"When is *what* to be?" said Davie.

"Oh, Davie Lamp! Davie Lamp! hoo, oh hoo, can ye thus trifle wi' a lonely woman's feelings? Answer me, Davie, if ye value yer ain peace o' mind, when is it to be?"

"When is *what* to be, Miss Peggy?"

"When are we to be married?"

"Married, be hang't! shouted David; "the knot was tied wi' me twenty years since, an' I've been hangin' by the neck an' kickin' for my life ever since!" and picking up his ladder, Davie was at the bottom of the stair with the speed of a sixpenny telegram.

"Oh, ye perjured, twa-faced, heartless man!" he heard Miss Peggy cry after him, "to cairy on an innocent lassie sae far, and you a married man! I'll write an' tell your wife, ye unfeelin' monster!"

And so she did; for yae nicht shortly after, as Davie was sitting at the fireside, enjoying a canny blaw o' the pipe, he received a sudden slap on the back of the head, which made him see brilliant fireworks for the moment.

Looking round, he beheld Mrs. Lamp standing sentry over him, with a frying-pan in her right hand, and a letter from Miss Peggy in her left.

"Wh—wh—what's the matter?" yelled the astonished husband, "Copenhagen an' Camlachie! what's the meanin' o' this? Murder and blue-sticks! is the woman mad?"

"'Od, I'll mad ye, ye heartless rascal! makin' proposals o' marriage to a stairheid auld maid, an' you a twenty-year married man! Read that! The women folks, it seems, dinna ken ye're married; but I'll pit my domestic mark on ye, my fine man!"

"Feth, an' ye've dune that already," said Davie, pathetically fingering the back o' his head, whereon had arisen in the short interval a lump as big as three closely associated duck-eggs. "The public 'ill ken I'm a married man noo wi' a vengeance!"

A full explanation was afterwards given and accepted, but Davie, poor man, was not able to put on his official skippet-bonnet next morning on account of the swelling on the back of his head; and he has since been forced to wear his worset nicht-cap. So, if ye should happen to see a Gleska lamplichter rinnin' aboot wi' a Kilmarnock cool on, that's Davie! He's a weel-disposed, innocent, harmless man, Davie; but if ye're "on for fun," and ye want him to throw his ladder at ye, jist ye ask him—"Hoo's Miss Peggy? an' whan is't comin' aff?"

That mak's a lively subject o' Davie!

TAMMAS THORL'S FOTTYGRAPHIC EXPERIENCES.

Tammas Thorl was a working joiner to trade, and was a sort of universal genius in his way. He was naturally inventive and versatile, and was seldom at a loss in finding some loop-hole to escape from a difficulty.

He was a very extensively married man, Tammas, enjoying every day of his blessed life the sweet society of his wife and hale fourteen of a family.

When trade was brisk, and wages were good, Tammas got on fairly well, but a time of trade slackness was a terrible affliction to the Thorl family.

Now, trade had been flat for some considerable time, and at last Tammas was thrown idle. As a natural consequence Mrs. Thorl showed temper—was, in fact, in a high state of revolt with herself generally, and with Tammas Thorl in particular.

"It's a black look-oot this, Tammas," she said to her husband one morning when the last handful of meal had gone into the family parritch-pat. "What we're to dae for food, fire, an' clothing this winter, gudeness only kens. Oh, that I ever flung mysel' awa' on a puir workin' joiner, wi' a white apron on, an' his sleeves up, when I micht hae gotten an elegant counter-lowper, wi' sixteen shillin's a-week, nae broken time, an' a braw starched 'dickie' on!"

Tammas was silent; his heart was sad, and his hope, like his pipe at that particular moment, was completely burned out. What more could he do? He had tried hard for a job, however humble, and had failed. He had worn out his boots, and latterly lost his "specs" looking for work, and all to no purpose.

"You that's a genius, Tammas," continued his spouse, "can ye no' try something or ither, nae matter what, only let it be—something?"

"What wad ye suggest, Mattie?"

"Oh, onything at a', Tammas; poetry, for instance,—ye're gleg at clinkin' the rhymes."

"Poetry, be hang't! D'ye want me to get sixty days in Barnhill Poor's-house?"

"Weel, then, Tammas, could ye no' become a bailie, or a toon-cooncillor, or, say, a member o' Parliament? There's lots o' nice sugary tit-bits an' canny perquisites gaun wi' the bailie jobs, I'm tell't. What's mair, the bailies are no' subject to idle-sets, like puir workin'-men."

"A bailie—a toon-cooncillor—a member o' Parliament," repeated Tammas, thoughtfully rubbing his chin. "Weel, I have maybe the genius, Mattie, but I'm fair stuck for the want o' eddication."

"Ed-i-ca-tion!" sneered Mattie; "h'm! a' that ye've got to dae is jist to imitate the rest o' the candidates by swallowing every kind o' electoral pill put before ye, pledgin' yersel' to bring in hunders o' 'bills' for the workin'-men, an' promisin' to grow them cabbages as big as cab-wheels. An' if ye seriously think on't, Tammas, there's Johnny Gibb, the lath-splitter, he could be yer richt-haun' 'committee-man;' for last week, nae farrer back, he got a new suit o' claes on 'tick,' an' had his hair cut by a journeyman barber!"

"No, no, Mattie; there's owre mony at the job already."

"Weel, then, there's the 'Schule-brod,' Tammas; ye'd mak' a first-rate Schule-Brod officer;—ye've jist a heid for a lum hat!"

"What, Mattie! me a Schule-Brod officer! chasin' bare-heided an' bare-fittit wee laddíes up an' doon back wynds an' closses! No, no, Mattie; not for Tammas Thorl!"

"Weel, then, there's Bill-deliverin', Lamp-lichtin', an' Window-cleanin'; Shooin'-machine, Prudential Society, an' Book canvassin'."

"Stop, stop, Mattie! I have it noo. I was reading the other day aboot Fottygraffy, an hoo to learn it. I'll set to an' mak' a fottygraff box, an' tak' likenesses at sixpence a heid. Bring oot my tool chest, Mattie."

"Eh, Tammas, that's jist the verra thing," agreed Mattie; "ye've the genius, Tammas; ye've the tools; ye've the wood, an' ye've me an' your fourteen bairns to experiment on."

So, all at once, in a sense, Tammas Thorl found himself putting together a photographer's "box," on the most improved principles, the sweat of honest endeavour on his brow, and a bright hope of success in his heart.

In three days he had completed his preparations, and was ready for a start in business as an amateur photographer.

Just by way of experiment, he consented to try his prentice hand on a family group of Mattie and the bairns. The picture was a striking success. It *struck* Mattie, and the few who saw it, all of a heap. It was as black as a sweep's face, and looked like a free sketch done on the banks of the Congo—Mattie representing an aged negress, surrounded by fourteen young African "hopefuls," and all mouthed from ear to ear with sable smiles. Tammas ingeniously blamed the mixed atmosphere of the kitchen for the sooty complexion of the picture, and prophesied bright success in the elevated garret he had just rented for a month as a professional studio.

"But Tammas, my man," remarked his managing spouse, "ye'll need to tak' a new name, if ye mean to prosecute the art professionally. Plain Tammas Thorl, ye ken, wad never, never, never dae."

"That's already settled, Mattie. I've jist lengthened my name into Russian-Polish. See, there's my sign-brod, jist this moment finished; the pent's no dry yet (holding up a rudely-lettered trade-sign.) Can ye read?—

SIGNOR TAMMASKI THORLOWSKI, FAMILY FOTTYGRAFFER. *N.B.—Country Orders Punkwally Attended to.*

"Hoo will that dae, Mattie? It's up to Tommy, I think, no' sayin' owre muckle for mysel'."

"Eh, me, Tammas, that's jist rale braw," said Mrs. Thorlowski, admiringly; "an' if ye wad only cut aff yer chin-beard, Tammas, leaving on naething but your moustache, stiffened at baith ends wi' a lick o' caun'le grease, an'

learn to speak broken English, then there's no' a man nor woman in the toon but wad tak' ye for a rale foreigner."

"The idea's grand, Mattie. Trust me; I can imitate the foreigner to perfection."

In high hopes, therefore, and sanguine of success, Signor Thorlowski at once occupied his "studio," hung out his graphic "trade-ticket," and patiently awaited the first sign of public favour.

But when was genius rewarded? Hour after hour passed wearily by, but no individual unit of the great public outside found the way up to Signor Thorlowski's photographic chambers.

But ah, stop! there at last was *one* sensible man, surveying, from the street below, his "trade-ticket" through an eye-glass!

He was a smart young man to look at, with just the faintest tendency to apparent "seed" in his get-up; carried a worn umbrella under his left arm; wore shoes rather down-at-heel, and two sizes small; and had on his hands the interesting remains of a pair of yellow "kids."

After a careful scrutiny of Signor Thorlowski's picturesque sign-board, the smart-looking young stranger disappeared in the entry leading to the "studio," and presently reached the top of the lofty staircase.

"Signor Thorlowski, I presume?" said the smart-looking young man, bowing most graciously.

Signor Thorlowski bowed in return.

"Do you speak English, Signor?"

"I speak English do," returned Tammas, whose only idea of broken English was simply a reversing of the words.

"Then, let me tell you, Signor," began this plausible young man, "let me tell you, that if you mean to run the photographic business successfully, you must advertise!—advertise! —advertise! Do you comprehend, Signor?"

"Me comprehend very much!" replied Tammas.

"Well then," resumed the smart young man, "you must understand, Signor, that I'm local reporter and advertisement-lifter for the *Commercial Gazette.* Advertise in our columns and I'll *puff* you. Will you advertise?"

"Advertise I certainly will."

"Good; and to what extent, Signor?"

"Extent any!" replied the interesting Tammas, throwing apart his two hands expressive of the unreserved amplitude of his advertising order.

"My fortune's made!" said the smart young man, in a low *aside.* Then turning about, he said aloud:—

"Will you kindly put yourself exclusively in my hands in this matter? I will draw up your advertisement, Signor; believe me, I have had great experience in that line."

"Put in your hands myself I exclusively will," frankly replied Tammas. "Experience you have much; experience I have none, none!" (shaking his head depreciatingly).

"Ah, very good! very good! And now, good day, Signor, and many thanks! Expect a newspaper *puff,* and a crowd of customers at your studio door to-morrow. Good day!" and the smart young man effusively bowed himself out.

Next morning Tammas got a copy of the *Commercial Gazette* wet from the press, and was delighted to read as follows:

"SIGNOR THORLOWSKI'S NEW STUDIO.—We direct the attention of our numerous readers to Signor Thorlowski's advertisement in another column. This talented gentleman, we understand, has obtained Royal recognition on the Continent, and stands at the head of the photographic profession. The Signor's 'machine' is new, his process patent and instantaneous, and his charges are most moderate. During his brief stay in town, he is likely to sweat daily under the pleasing confusion of blocked doorways and endless calls upon the exercise of his charming and unrivalled art."

"Faith," thought Tammas to himself, "Signor Thorlowski's a big success. After a', there's something in a name. A rose

may smell as sweet by any other name, but no' plain Tammas Thorl! But, hillo! here's my first customer!"

The door of the "studio" was banged up, and in swaggered a local Jack Tar, a fresh-water sailor, two-thirds liquored, his "bunting" gaily flying, and himself bowling along under a fresh breeze and an easy helm.

"Glad to find ye aboard, Cap'n! (hitching up his loose pants). I've rolled in to have my phottygraff done; how's the wind for the job, Cap'n—eh?"

"Dee wind is beaut'ful; will you please seat take?"

"No, I want myself 'done' aboard ship, you understand? climbing a for'ard rope, like—see?" and Jack at once threw himself into the picturesque attitude of an able-bodied seaman hauling himself up a bowline, hand-over-hand.

Signor Thorlowski smiled consentingly.

"Stop! steady! one moment! don't stir! patent action! instantaneous production! there!" and before Jack could wink, he was instantly "photographed" in the graphic attitude of a sailor ascending with great activity an imaginary rope!

"Hillo!" shouted Jack, when he saw the "picture" "I'm agoin', it there, Cap'n; I look smart and happy, eh? I'm a-climbin', I guess; but—where's the rope?"

"Ah, my good friend, dee rope's understood—dee rope's understood."

"All right, Cap'n, all right! It's a curiosity of art—this is; I'm agoin'. Good-bye!"

"Six-pence, my dear friend; six-pence I require!" said the Signor, extending his hand.

"For what, Cap.'n?"

"For pay-ment."

"All right, Cap'n, all right! the payment like the rope, is understood." And spreading his canvas, the fresh-water tar "lay stiff to the wind" and sailed smartly out.

The Signor was in the act of following him, when he was

suddenly confronted by a second customer, in the shape of a sun-burnt farmer, cudgel in hand, who explained that he wanted his "fottygraph" done in oil, with the seed-apron on, and he in the act of "sowin' the ground."

"Delightful!" exclaimed the Signor, "I shall be very much happy, indeed! Will you please seat take?'

In two seconds the worthy farmer had laid aside both his cudgel and his coat, assumed the seedman's "apron," and was busy waving his hand backwards and forwards as if in the act of sowing the seed in an imaginary field.

"Can ye tak' my han' gaun that way?" asked the subject.

"I am Signor Thorlowski!" was the sufficient reply. "Steady! a regular sweep of dee arm; there!" and, presto, the Signor disappeared, and almost instantly returned with the negative.

The "picture" was a screamer; it looked like a man in his shirt sleeves, with six hands!

Immediately the farmer saw it, he hitched on his coat, picked up his cudgel, and went for the astonished Signor, who vanished down stairs like a telegram, closely pursued by the enraged customer.

Gaining the street, the ingenious Signor dodged up and down several streets, and cleverly eluding his pursuer, he returned to his "studio" by a back court.

Reaching his room, he found a third customer awaiting his return, in the shape of a stout "lodging-house" wife, of some fifty fat summers.

"Are ye the fottygrapher?" was the new customer's reply to the Signor's gracious bow.

"Yes, ma—dame, I am that highly-sookcessful man, at your pleas—ure."

"Can ye 'draw' me weel na? for the pictur's for my 'intended,' wha'll prove my fifth man."

"I promise you I will sat—is—fy your five husband very much. I have just returned from being 'treated' by a de-

lighted custom—er. He was in great rap—ture about his 'picture,' he was!"

"Ye're a' oot o' breath; ye've been rinnin'?"

"He was pursuing me with his hospitality, that customer! but I don't drink; no, no! I don't drink!"

"Weel, tak' me quick, for I'm in a bleezin' hurry!"

"In wan min—ute! steady! there!" and, like magic, the nimble Signor had placed the 'picture' in the hands of his stout customer.

The photograph looked like a cart of coals emptied over a chair!

An agonised yell, and the enterprising Signor's fat customer had collapsed on the floor.

"Faith!" thought the Signor, after he had succeeded in resuscitating his collapsed patron, "I've acted the foreign fottygrapher lang enough. It's no' gaun to turn oot a paying spec, I see. I'll drap the hale business, an' become plain Tammas Thorl yince mair."

That same afternoon Tammas shut up his "studio," and returned home to the bosom of his family and—starvation!

The joke, however, did not end there; for next morning, Tammas was horrified to read the following paragraph in the *Commercial Gazette:*

"A MAD PHOTOGRAPHER.—An escaped lunatic, calling himself Signor Tammaski Thorlowski, is under warrant of arrest on a charge of causing the death of a lady-customer, who fainted through fright on seeing her own "likeness," as done by the mad Signor. The photograph was upside down and looked like a heap of roadside metal. In the course of the same day, our local reporter has learned, this same lunatic photograper took a sailor's photo, which was mistaken for a chimpanzee climbing a tree for a cocoa-nut! The ingenious signor also took a west-country farmer in the act of seeding the soil: the farmer came out with six hands, and a face like a Chinese-Peruvian. Last week we announced the escape from custody of an inmate of Gartnavel Lunatic Asylum. We seriously ask the local authorities

to connect the escape of that patient with the lunatic appearance of Signor Tammaski Thorlowski, and to have the madman securely housed again. Signor Thorlowski's patent flip-flap, instantaneous, no-preparation, self-acting photographic box is a gross fraud, like its mad inventor, whose disordered head wants instant shaving by a local barber."

"Great Jerusalem!" exclaimed Tammas, dropping the paper with nervous trembling. "It's a mercy, Mattie, that I happened to adopt a foreign name. Henceforth, and for ever, I'm plain Tammas Thorl, an' nae ither body; for it's safer, I see, to starve as a joiner, than to fatten as a fotty-graffer. But, let me catch that smart reporter! He may be a clever han' at liftin' advertisements, but I'll show him hoo to lift a rascal a kick!"

THE SITTIN'-DOON CAULD.

Douce-gaun, quate-tongued, and canny-minded Wattie Wabster drew cotton thread through a handloom, in the Gorbals of Glasgow, some twenty-five years ago.

Now Wattie, who was on the wrong side of fifty, had been an abstainer in practice, if not in professed principle, for a quarter of a century. He had never been blessed with a family; and for want of occupation of a more pronounced domestic nature, had for many years occupied his leisure hours with books, and the study of elocution, economising his talents in that way by making an occasional appearance as a local Hamlet in the amateur theatricals of some of the outlying suburbs, such as Strathbungo and Camlachie.

Now Wattie, poor man, had been suffering from a chronic cold in the head for a whole month back, and had exhausted a full score of homely cures on the head of his "sittin'-doon cauld," rather than trust himself to the tender mercies and expenses of doctor's drugs.

"Toots !" Wattie would say, when remonstrated with for his persevering obstinacy, "I wadna gi'e ae wag o' my auld granny's mutch-strings owre my trouble—if she was only to the fore, daicent body !—for a' the M.D.'s between this and far enough ; deed no !"

So Wattie stuck by hame-poulticing, and his sittin'-doon cauld stuck by him, and things went on in this unsatisfactory way until Mattie says to him one day—

"Noo, guidman, I'll tell ye what ye'll dae. Your voice, ye ken, is sunken awa' doon to a kirk-yaird hearseness, your nose is rinnin' like a burn, an' your twa een are as red as collops, sae ye'll tak' and try for the last time a perscripshun was gi'en me the day by Mrs. Howdie, the auld-wife medical, wha leeves owre by at the burn-side, an' she warrants me ye'll be as hale's hersel' the morn's mornin'. Sae ye'll dae't, Wattie, an' get that unco plaguey cauld lifted oot o' ye; for ye've been naething but a crunkle't an' yisless auld man ever since it settled doon on ye, an' that wasna yesterday, atweel."

"What's the nature o' the cure, Mattie ?" quo' Wattie, looking up inquiringly.

"Ye'll get a yaird or twa o' new flannel row't roun' your heid, six or eicht pairs o' auld stockins drawn on ilka foot, hauf-a-dizzen o' woollen grauvits row'd roun' your throat; and then ye'll super-add to that my ain auld marriage-plaid tied roun' your shouthers; then ye'll next——"

"Mattie !" quo' Wattie, in a tone of expostulation.

"——Then ye'll next swallow a pint o' XXX porter, *warm*, wi' a gill o' Irish whisky mixed up wi't, alang wi'——"

"Mattie ! Mattie !" again broke in the amazed patient.

"——Alang wi' a guid bit sprinklin' o' cayenne pepper to mak' it ream," continued Mattie ; an' then, guidman, ye'll cannily say the Lord's Prayer, an' tummle into bed."

"Mattie ! Mattie ! Mattie !" interposed Wattie, for the third time; "feth, lass, an' I wad ha'e richt muckle need

to say the Lord's Prayer, an' repeat the Psalms o' Dauvit into the bargain, to face a cure o' siccan stupendous proportions!"

"It's a desperate case, Wattie, and needs a desperate cure. The trouble maun be swat oot o' ye, guidman, at ony cost, and if Mrs. Howdie's perscripshun disna sort ye, there's witchcraft in't, an' we'll be forced, as a last shift, to heeze ye owre the kirk-steeple; draw ye three times under a cuddie's belly; or get ye to eat a roastit moose, to charm the wearifu' cauld oot o' ye."

"Aweel," quo' Wattie, resignedly, "if it maun be, I suppose it maun jist be. But ye ken, Mattie, I dinna meddle wi' the dram, an' I'm no certain hoo the cure wad particularly affeck me," and Wattie dubiously shook his head as if he was morally suspicious of the porter and pepper both, not to speak of the added whisky.

"The cure'll work a' the better o' that, guidman, tak' ye nae fear, an' the morn's mornin' 'ill see ye a new man."

So the "cure" it was agreed, was to be at once acted upon, and Mattie immediately proceeded to envelope Wattie in a triple and quadruple proof-plaiting of woollen hose, soft flannel, and picturesque plaiding, which martyrdom he withstood as became a man, a Christian, and—a weaver!

Then the XXX stout was brought in, the cayenne pepper and the Irish whisky added, a handful of sugar thrown in, and then Wattie heroically swallowed the contents of the chappin bowl, and immediately thereafter warstled into bed with an ill-suppressed groan, and a feeling that he had been fairly done for by Mattie.

Immediately Wattie, douce man, had got into bed, Mattie, kind woman, began to pile fresh blankets and bed-coverlets over him, and to super-add to that anything and everything she could lay hands on in the shape of bed-covers, petticoats, short-gowns, top-coats, and general drapery.

"Oh, Mattie, Mattie!" groaned poor Wattie, his flushed

nose being alone visible through a chink in the enormous pile of bed-clothes.

"What's the maitter, Wattie, dear?"

"The maitter, Mattie! Ye've surely put Ben-Lomond on the tap o' me; I'm fair bilin' wi' sweat!"

"Patience, Wattie! ha'e patience for a wee. Thanks to Mrs. Howdie, the cure's workin' grand," answered Mattie, throwing over him, by way of an addendum to her remarks, an extra half-dozen old coats and petticoats.

"Deil tak' Mrs. Howdie, an' her East Indian cure baith! Dinna pit ony mair coats on me, Mattie, for goodness sake, or ye'll destroy me a'thegither. There's forty-five pund o' steam on every square inch o' the blankets already, an' if ye dinna act wi' caution there'll be an explosion, an' I'll be blawn ayont the mune, like the witches in Macbeth, before the morn's mornin'."

The bowl of mixed liquors which Mattie had induced her guidman to swallow was clearly beginning to act, and Wattie was fast becoming imaginative and poetical.

"Lie still, Wattie, dear! lie still!" said Mattie, in a persuasive tone of voice, emptying over him a last basketful of discarded clothing. "Lie still, an' sleep!"

There was silence for a few minutes, and then, spoken in a low, melancholy, impressive, and deeply tragic voice, these words were heard issuing from underneath the piled-up blankets:—

"Sleep, gentle sleep, how have I frighted thee;
That thou no more will weigh my eyelids down,
And steep my senses in forgetfulness!"

"Dod, he's awa' wi't noo," quo' Mattie to herself, as she cocked her ears to Wattie's slumberous soliloquy.

Presently the voice of Wattie was again heard issuing from under the bed-clothes, this time in a subdued and persuasive undertone:—

"How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears; soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Look, Jessica: see how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold.
There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdest,
But in its motion like an angel sings;
Such harmony is in immortal souls."

At the name "Jessica," Mattie visibly started.

"Wha was Jessica?" she mentally queried, with an offended cast o' her dangling "mutch" strings, "I won'er if the daft auld fule is dreamin' o' some fair 'flame' o' his young days. Dod, it's true, I see, what the auld proverb says—when the dram's in, the wit's oot; Oh, Wattie, Wattie!" and lifting a portion of the mixed mass of coverlets that enswathed him, she stared severely at poor Wattie, and suspiciously shook her head.

But Wattie was fast becoming unconscious to his everyday surroundings. He had mounted his dramatic Pegasus, and in fancy was bounding brilliantly through the star-roofed realms of fiction. His eyes were full of supernatural light, and fixing a withering look upon Mattie, he exclaimed—

"Take, oh take those lips away
That so sweetly were forsworn,
And those eyes—the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn."

"The man's fairly by himsel'," ejaculated the astonished Mattie.

Presently there was a moment's quietude, and then, suddenly, and without warning, the superincumbent mass of bedclothes heaved up like an active volcano, and Wattie, his eyes flashing fire, and the perspiration thickly beaded on his brow, sat bolt upright in the bed, and cried aloud with deep intonation, and melo-dramatic gesture—

"Give me another horse—bind up my wounds!
Oh coward conscience, how thou dost afflict me;
The lights burn blue—it now is dead midnight.
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
What do I fear?—myself?
A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!"

"Mercy me!" exclaimed Mattie, with both hands spread above her head in astonishment, "the puir man's clean daft," and the next moment Wattie verified the statement by taking a terrific leap across the table fronting the bed, right out to the centre of the floor.

Catching up the poker, he flourished it above his head, exclaiming—

"Let Rome in Tiber melt! and the wide arch
Of the rang'd Empire fall! Here is my space;
On this firm spot unmov'd I stand—or fall!"

"Clean gone!" screamed Mattie, clasping her hands together, "as daft's the Barber o' Dunse!" and the next moment, noticing Wattie fixing his glowing eyes on her, she ran for the stairhead, to seek the shelter of the house next door.

Mattie, simple woman, never dreamt for a moment that the "chappin' bowl o' liquor" had taken the goodman's head. She had never seen Wattie the "waur o' drink," had never, in fact, seen him in such a state of ecstasy before, and wrongly guessed that the fever had mounted to his brain, and that there was "naething for puir Wattie noo but the hospital an' a shaved heid."

But if Mattie was justly alarmed at the sudden turn in her husband's condition, the neighbours, on hearing her flurried and disconnected story, were with reason more so. She had neither nerve nor time to particularise the nature of the cure which she had prescribed to Wattie an hour before. Therefore the whole stairhead, justly alarmed, and curious to know the extent of the danger, turned out in

force, and advanced into the presence of the disordered weaver in a collective group.

The sight which met their eyes on entering was ludicrous in the extreme, and, despite the insane condition of the dramatic weaver, produced roars of laughter. From his head depended a yard of flannel, like the jaunty flap characteristic of the slashed hat of a pirate. Over his feet and legs were drawn an uncounted number of pairs of stockings, which gave his "understandings" the appearance of being very far gone in a dropsy. Across his shoulders Mattie's "marriage plyde" was artistically thrown—while his own shirt-tails did duty for a starved-looking kilt. In his right hand he flourished the kitchen poker, handling it much in the style of a General's sword, His eyes were dilated and fixed on vacancy. Starting back on seeing the turned-out stairhead enter the house, Wattie extended the poker towards them, exclaiming—

"Look where they come! Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever medicine them to that sweet sleep,
Which they own'd yesterday."

"Puir auld Wattie!" said a commiserative neighbour.

"Rin for the pollis," responded a thin acid voice.

"Get him coaxed into bed," suggested a third party.

Jack Seam, a tailor, who lived on the stairhead, and a thin little apology for a man, made bold to step out from the rest, and thought to overawe the demented wabster by combining a gallant bearing with an assumed show of authority.

"Walter Wabster," he began, speaking in as deep a tone of voice as his diminutive form would allow, "I conjure thee to lay aside that misused bludgeon, and to re-assume thy suspended rationality," and the little tailor made a stout show of advancing upon him.

"Another step," exclaimed Wattie, "and I shall run thee through! Caitiff, depart!"

"Tak' care o' yer skin ye adventurous buddy!" said some one, "if Wattie kaimes yer heid wi' that poker, ye'll claw whaur it's no yuckie for lang an' mony a day."

"Lay down these arms!" continued the valiant Knight of the Needle, stretching himself upwards to his full height, which was less than moderate.

"Withdraw! withdraw!" retorted Wattie;—

"A thousand hearts are great within my bosom,
Advance our standards, set upon our foes;
Our ancient word of courage—fair St. George!—
Inspires us with the spleen of fiery dragons:
Upon them! Victory sits on our helms!"

Saying which, Wattie flourished aloft his domestic bludgeon, and rushed upon his foes.

Instantly there was a general stampede. The crowd of alarmed neighbours made for their several places of abode, and the last animated object noticed was the retreating form of the tailor, whose heels were seen to play like forked lightning in their flying passage down stairs.

"Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths,
Grim-visag'd War has smooth'd his wrinkl'd front,"

triumphantly exclaimed Wattie, as he proudly surveyed the deserted stairhead.

Wattie, however, despite his intellectual transmutation to a higher sphere, was not physically beyond frost-bite, and the stairhead being cold and draughty, and his kilts painfully short, he prudently returned to the shelter and warmth of the kitchen-fire. Whether or not he saw the immemorial "faces in the fire" patent to midnight reveries, is not given to say, but he sat there for some time, unmolested and serene, complimenting himself on his brilliant victory in the choicest of Shakesperian quotations.

As for Mattie, poor body, she had meanwhile run over to acquaint Mrs. Howdie with the result of the "cure," and as

the distance was a good Scotch mile, she had not yet returned.

By and by, when the melo-dramatic wabster had exhausted Shakespeare and himself both, he dozed over into a quiet sleep. The terrible poker had all but dropped from his nerveless grasp, and he was just on the point of completing a third deliberate snore, when a pair of rough hands were laid on his shoulders, and starting up, he found himself confronted by two Highland policemen, who each made a seizure of him.

"'What ho! Without there! Unhand me, villains!'" exclaimed Wattie, making an abortive effort to shake himself free.

"She's fou," said No. 188 policeman.

"As fou's ta Clyde," responded No. 199, taking at the same time the poker from Wattie by sheer force.

Full of heroism, Wattie at once sprang to his feet, exclaiming—

> "Give me my sword, put on my glorious crown,
> I have immortal longings in me.
> Now, now, no more
> The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist my lips.
> Softly, good friends; release me where I stand!"

"Hooch!" exclaimed No. 188 policeman, glancing sarcastically at bewildered Wattie's shoulder-plaid and kilt, "she'll pe gaun to act ta pold Rob Roy an' sign ta teetotal all at wance an' ta same time. Come awa' to ta office, Shakespeare!" and the two officials made a move towards the door.

Simultaneously with the appearance of the two policemen, the alarmed neighbours, upon whom Wattie had made his brilliant charge, had one by one returned to the stairhead, where much interested discussion took place over his capture and excited mental condition; and as none of the neighbours, in the absence of Mattie, knew anything of the

true cause of Wattie's temporary derangement, the constables were at a loss how to act. Some insisted on his instant removal to prison, or an asylum; whilst others sensibly declared he should be put once more to bed.

While things remained in this way, Mattie, accompanied by Mrs. Howdie, rushed in upon the scene.

"Mercy me!" exclaimed Mattie, when she beheld the two policemen; "what's happened at a'?—wha's murdered?—what desperate stroke o' mischief ha'e ye committed, Wattie?"

A chorus of voices replied to Mattie's question in a dozen different ways; but above the din of argument and explanation, the deep-toned, tragic voice of the disordered weaver was heard in appeal—

> "I have done nought,
> The spirit within me hath been so at war,
> And thus hath so bestirr'd me in my sleep,
> That beads of sweat have stood upon my brow,
> Like bubbles in a late disturbèd stream,
> And in my head strange notions have appear'd,
> Of trenches, tents, frontiers, and parapets,
> Of cannon, culverin, of soldiers slain,
> And all the currents of a heady fight;
> Thus, thus, good friends, if I have sinn'd in aught,
> Let gentleness my strong enforcement be."

"Lowse yer han's aff my guidman this moment, ye ill-set loons," broke in Mattie, in an excited tone of voice, catching up at the same instant a hearth-brush wherewith to enforce her command.

"Grup the angry auld wife, Donal, an' I'll haud on by Hamlet," said policeman No. 188. "Tak' the proom frae her. There's craftwitch in her e'e."

When Dougal said "craftwitch," he probably meant witchcraft, and as he happened to be looking over his left shoulder when he spoke, that fact may partly account for the reversion of the syllables.

Policeman No. 199 gallantly went for Mattie, and Mattie, with the courage of her convictions, threw herself into position, and stoutly defended herself behind a chair.

"Give me my sword! Put on my warrior crown!"

again exclaimed Wattie, on seeing his wife in danger, the excitement bringing on a return of his disorder.

"Stop! stop! for guidness sake, let me explain maitters!" exclaimed Mrs. Howdie, and thereupon she proceeded to inform the company as to the nature of Wattie's trouble—'A sair sittin'-doon cauld that wadna lift; how Mattie had come to her for advice; the 'cure' that had been recommended and tried; and this—the misguided result."

"An what aboot Shakespeare, then?" asked policeman No. 188, pointing significantly to Wattie, the stairhead tragedian.

"Pit the puir excited man into his bed, and let him sweat oot the trouble under the blankets," said Mrs. Howdie.

"Ring down the curtain! Hark! the prompter's bell,"

added Wattie, with his eyes romantically turned upwards to the ceiling. And to this alternative the two constables agreed.

"Han'le him gently, then," said Mattie, and in two minutes more Wattie was carefully deposited under the bed-clothes, with the Shakespearian steam pretty well blown off his bewildered brain.

On the retiral of the company, the last incident witnessed was Wattie magnificently waving his hand to them by way of adieu—

"And now, good friends, a long and last farewell."

So, Mrs. Howdie sat doon by Wattie's bedside, and assisted Mattie to sweat the "dour cauld oot o' him." This task they finally accomplished by the "breek o' daylicht," the method

of cure being simply a persistent repetition of the hard sweating process.

Then, when the cure had done its work, and Wattie had sunk at last into the silence of exhaustion, his memory of Shakespeare completely defeated and used up, did the sweet influence of sleep, gentle sleep—the blessing of which he had so feelingly invoked in the earlier stage of his disorder—descend upon his troubled senses, smoothing the "wrinkled front of war" within him, and leading his Thespian charger into the peaceful stable.

Next morning, when Wattie had recovered his lost senses, he looked about him inquiringly, and finding Mattie to be alone, he made a signal for "the len' o' her lug a moment," and cautiously whispered—

"Mattie, what ha'e ye made o' Mrs. Howdie?"

"She gaed hame wi' the first breck o' licht," replied Mattie "an' ye may thank her skill an' patience that ye're in the land o' the leevin' this day. She han'ult ye like a licensed doctor."

"Maybe ay, an' maybe yes," quo' Wattie, with a dubious head-shake. "Nae doot she's a won'erfu' woman, Mrs. Howdie; but Mattie, I'll tell ye a deid secret—the cure was waur than the disease!"

RAISIN' HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW.

TAM FREW was a journeyman corkcutter in the Sautmarket of Glasgow, half-a-century ago.

He was a gey "wide" chap, Tam, and was strongly attached to what he termed "the Auld Kirk o' Scotland," which, in Queen's English, meant a stiff dram.

Indeed, so very fond was Tam of "turnin' up his pinkie," that he latterly lost both his credit and character, surren-

dering himself very much to the blandishments of idleness and street-corner "loafing."

Tam's faithful better-half, who was a mill-lass before marriage, rebelled in vain against her husband's frequent idle-sets as often as they occurred, and which generally consumed about three weeks of every calendar month.

Tam always frankly admitted his fault, expressing unlimited contrition and repentance, and promising amendment for the future—a future which never came. To make ends meet, Tam's young wife was thus forced to return to her former occupation as a steam-loom weaver, while Tam, the muckle ne'er-do-weel, habitually ate the bread of idleness, and hung aimlessly about the street-corners, an interesting specimen of the "man who can't get work."

Things drifted on in this purposeless way for better than a year after Tam's marriage, and would have gone on for long enough, but for the vigorous interference of his spirited mother-in-law, who had a genuine interest in her daughter, and who, according to Tam's version, had a tongue like the "toon-bells," and a temper like ten ordinary women.

Anyhow, it was clear that Tam's mother-in-law was "an able yin," and proved herself the perfect "bubbly-jock" of her worthless son-in-law's idle existence. She faced-up to him in season and out of season; she covered him with ridicule; she showed him her nails; and on one extreme occasion she took him so severely to task that he was fain to cry for quarter, and had to finally fly the premises!

"Talk about legal separations," quoth Tam to himself, when he had gained the safety of the open street, "we've but sma' need for lawyers, an' legal deeds o' separation, as lang's we enjoy the great blessing o' a beloved mother-in-law! As for what's at the back o' that, an a' the rest o't, let us pray!"

Tam having been thus thrown upon his own resources,

very soon found himself in sore straits, and was fain before long to turn his thriftless hands to any odd jobs that chance might throw in his way.

It was the terrible "resurrection times' in Glasgow, the recollection of which is still referred to with feelings of horror by elderly people. Comedy, however, is proverbially mixed up with tragedy in the drama of human life, and the story I have to tell belongs to the humorous side of things.

Well, to resume, Tam was standing one day at the fit o' the Can'leriggs, within an easy bow-shot of the gate of the old Ramshorn Churchyard. He had been idle as usual for a short time—about seventeen weeks only!—and was in a bad way financially, and, indeed, in every other way. His waistcoat hung frightfully loose on his empty stomach, and his throat was fair cracking with drouth. In point of fact, Tam was just clean desperate, and was ready to undertake any sort of job which might turn him in a penny.

"Hillo! Tam, ye're the vera man I'm wantin' to see," said Johnny Treddles, an oot o' work Radical weaver; "can ye tak' a share in a risky, but guid-peying job?"

"A guid-peying job, Johnny; man, that's what I'm fair deein' for the want o'; can ye put me in the way o't?"

"Can ye keep a secret, Tam?"

"Brawly, Johnny, brawly,—if I'm in the pie, ye ken."

"That's jist what I'm after, Tam—a trusty confederate. Lend me your lug a moment, Tam."

Tam freely inclined his "lug" towards Treddles, who whispered a few startling words in his ear.

"*What!* lift a deid body, Johnny?"

"An' what for no? The money's white the moment the job's dune."

"Weel, that's certainly a temptation, Johnny, but what aboot the risk?"

"Oo, Tam, as for that, we'll jist tak' the risk as it chances

to turn oot; it's but a triflin' concern that. Are ye on for a share in the job?"

"I'm your man, Johnny; a starving stomach canna afford to stan' lang on ceremony."

"That's richt, Tam; leave it there!" and the two friends mutually shook hands over the bargain.

At a late hour that same night, Tam met by appointment his friend Treddles in the back-room of an attic apartment, occupying the gable-corner of a dilapidated apartment situated in College Street, where, for an hour before, a couple of strong-bodied Irish labourers had been anxiously awaiting their arrival.

Here the immediate business of the night was discussed with whispered words and bated breath, lest any of the numerous chinks in the walls, or in the decayed floorage of the room, should reveal the secret of their unlawful purpose.

The town-clocks were heard to proclaim the hour of twelve before the four "resurrectionists" thought it prudent to stir from their dilapidated domicile; but with the stroke of "one" they found themselves scaling the low back wall of the old Ramshorn Kirkyard, carrying spades, a dark lantern, and a large coarse pock in which to steal away the lifted body.

With hushed footsteps they furtively crossed the intervening space, and were presently standing around a newly-formed grave.

"What sort o' body is't, Johnny?" anxiously enquired Tam, feeling nervous a bit at thought of the ghastly job in hand; "is't man, woman, or child we're gaun to lift?"

"Oh, it's a woman, Tam; only a woman! Here, man, see, tak' a 'pull' at that before ye tak' spade in hand." And Treddles handed his nervous associate a half-mutchkin bottle of spirits.

"Is—is—is the 'watch' set a' richt, Johnny, was ye

sayin'?" once more questioned Tam, as he handed back Treddles the half-mutchkin bottle.

"Paddy M'Rory's ahint the dyke," promptly answered Treddles.

"Ye're quite sure o' that, Johnny?"

"It canna possibly be otherwise, Tam, if there's ony truth in arithmetic; Barney Rooney here mak's the third man o' the original fowr o' us. Let's fa' to."

Delay they each knew was dangerous, and with one accord the three resurrectionists applied themselves, pick and spade, to the grim task in hand.

In a few moments they had cleared a foot of earth, and were just beginning to warm to their work, when an eerie cry, as of some ghostly night-bird, startled them, down to the length of their boots.

"What's that?" gasped out Tam, dropping the spade with fright.

"What's *what?*" asked Treddles, resting on his pick.

"What's *which?*" added Rooney, the Irishman.

"It's jist—naething!" said Treddles, with re-assuring voice, resuming suspended operations; "stick in, chaps, we're already mair than half-way doon; the grave's but shallow, an' the warst o't's owre."

In a few minutes Rooney's spade had touched the coffin-lid, and anxiety reached a climax.

"Get the pock shaken oot an' ready, Tam," said Treddles; "we'll prise the lid open in a jiffey."

Tam did as directed, feeling a kind of cold shivery sweat creeping down his back as he watched his associates applying their spades to lever open the coffin-lid.

"There na, that's it; fine, man!" exclaimed Treddles, a moment after, as Rooney wrenched off the lid; "a splendid *corp!* tak' care o't, Rooney; the pock, Tam, the pock! come doon, man, an' gie's a bit lift in wi't."

Tam jumped into the shallow cutting, and began to lend

a hand in "bagging" the resurrected body, when, all of a sudden, a gleam of moonlight clearly revealed the identity of the corpse to his startled eyes.

With a yell of horror, Tam dropped the body, shouting aloud——

"Stop! stop! put her back, for goodness sake! I—I—I wouldn't unearth that woman for a thousand worlds!"

"What's the matter, Tam? is't your sister?"

"Waur than that, Johnny."

"Your wife, then?"

"Waur than that—waur than even that, Johnny."

"Och sure, then, it must be the devil!" exclaimed Rooney, the Irishman, with a laugh.

"The devil couldna haud a can'le to her," yelled Tam; "put her back! put her back! keep her down, for goodness sake! She's———"

"Who? speak! quick! out with it! who is she?"

"My blessed mother-in-law!!!"

WHA RULES THE HOOSE?

WATTY WILSON was a turkey-red dyer wha lived at number 9 Nettlesome Lane, in the East End o' Gleska. He stood just five feet and half an inch in his stockings. Being small in stature, he was, by way of compensating reversion, large of mind, and following up his ambitious instincts, he had married Jean Jamieson, the biggest wife-body in the district.

Jean Jamieson was a winder in Bartholomew's Mill when Watty yae nicht popped the question, and brocht his bird doon.

Jean stood a foot above him in point of stature, and

after marriage towered ever so mony feet above him in the matter of domestic precedence—a condition of things that Watty did not at all relish, and against which he kicked in vain.

In the extremity of their domestic differences they flung epithets the reverse of complimentary at one another, which was amusing to their neighbours, if exasperating to themselves.

Watty, thrust into a corner by his better twa-thirds, would cry out, by way of ridiculing her great size—

"Six feet! Big six feet!" Whereat Jean would retaliate with—

"Five feet! Wee five feet!"

This contemptible thrust never failed to rouse Watty's anger; and stung into hot reprisal, he would next sing out—

"Elephant! Muckle elephant!"

Jean following up with—

"Midge! wee midgie!"

And so on, the domestic duel would proceed, Watty invariably coming off second best.

Thus far, and we proceed—the locality of our story changing to the back room of a Glasgow "public."

"Weel, Watty," one day said Bachelor John, a carpet weaver in a neighbouring factory; "an' hoo's a' wi' ye the nicht? Ye look a thocht dowff, dae ye no?"

"Dowff! H'm, it's a wonder I'm leevin'."

"What's gaen wrang, Watty? Is the wife badly, or what?"

"Badly, by Jing! I wish I saw her cauld and streekit!"

"Oh, Watty, Watty!" reproachfully exclaimed Bachelor John, lifting up his hands like a parish minister about to pronounce the benediction.

"Ay!—oh, Watty, Watty!" sarcastically retorted the forlorn husband, "but set ye on a het domestic gridiron, as

I am, and tell me if ye'd dae ocht but dance? Oh, Watty, Watty, indeed! If I had been as lang-heided a loon as ye are, Johnny, and never looked near the weemen-folks, it wad ha'e been muckle to my comfort this day."

"Eh, man, Watty, it's the auld story owre again, I see—blighted love! I'm rale vexed for ye, Watty. Can I dae ocht for ye—i' the way o' comin' atween you an' Jean, I mean?"

"If ye value yer heid keep awa' frae number 9 Nettlesome Lane," was the suggestive answer.

"Has Jean a bit o' temper, Watty?"

"A *bit* o' temper!" retorted the other. "H'm, if it wis only a *bit*, a body could pit up wi't. Man, Johnny, she has a hale worl' o' temper. She's a fair Tartar."

"Is she snuff?" questioned Bachelor John.

"Waur than snuff!" ruefully answered Watty.

"Sulphur?" put in Bachelor John.

"Waur than sulphur!" answered the dejected husband.

Bachelor John bethought himself a moment, and then, with a sudden lighting up of the countenance, he leaned across the table and whispered—

"Saltpetre?"

"Waur than Saut-Peter!" forlornly replied Watty.

Bachelor John recast in his mind the small dictionary of explosive words at his command, and after a thoughtful pause suggested as a climax—

"Gunpowder?"

"Waur than even gun-poother!" persisted the not-to-be comforted husband.

"Then, Watty, my lad, Jean's a conundrum, an' I gie her up."

"Think it oot a bit further," suggested the heart-crushed Watty.

"Then, at a venture, I'll go in for gun-cotton?"

"Ye're on the track noo," encouragingly responded the desperate husband. "Keep at it."

"Dynamite?" shouted aloud Bachelor John, as a last effort.

"A compound and general mix up o' a' the destructive elements ye've named, that's what she is!" rejoined the desperate Watty.

"Weel, that bates a'!" replied Bachelor John. "But, hark ye, Watty, I'll tell ye o' a ploy."

"What's that?"

"Pretend ye've listed, an' gang back this nicht to tak' a final fareweel o' her. There's something in that, ye'll find."

"Listed?" retorted Watty. "Man, I wadna venture to present mysel' afore the jaud unless I had the gun fairly on my shoother, by way o' self-preservation. She'd flee at me like a Bengal teegur!"

"The gun can be gotten," was the daring reply of Bachelor John. "An' what's mair, Watty, I'se gang up to the hoose wi' ye as a 'support.'"

"There'll be bluidshed, I fear," replied Watty; "but never mind. Onything's better than gaun thro' life wi' a cuisten-doon heid, an' a domestic hen crawin' like a cock owre ye, wi' its neb sunk in the nape o' yer neck. I'll 'list this vera nicht; an' to be consistent I'll join the Royal Forty-second, pit on the kilts, an' hand owre Jean my breeks as a farewell gift!"

That same nicht Wattie was seen repairing to number 9 Nettlesome Lane, with a veritable gun on his shoother, and no end of recruit ribbons on his bonnet, accompanied by his ingenious friend, Bachelor John, who had resolved to start forth as Watty's domestic guide, philosopher, and friend.

The gun — which, although uncharged, was of most formidable size and appearance—had been borrowed for the occasion.

"D'ye think I'll dae?" asked the martial recruit, as he and his friend plodded their way towards the domestic fort about to be stormed.

"Dae? Why, you'll cairry the position wi' a single rush!"

Watty groaned in spirit, and was less than half-sure of the result.

"If ye only knew her temper," he replied. "She wad face a Krupp cannon, let alane this empty stick that's hingin' owre my left shoother!"

"She's no to ken the gun's fu' o' naething, Watty. If she yokes ye wi' her cankery tongue, jist ye present the mooth o't at her, and I'll wager my best Sunday hat she tak's the farthest awa' corner o' the hoose for't."

"Ye—ye—ye dinna ken her, Johnny," replied the terrorised husband; "she can birl a spurkle like a dragoon's sword! But cannie! cannie there! this is the stair-fit; let's keep a calm sough as we approach the door. It's a crisis in my domestic career this—I feel it!"

"Courage, Watty, courage! Keep yer chin weel up, and dinna disgrace the Queen's coat!"

"Are ye a' richt an' ready?" finally asked the shivering Watty, as the pair at last stood before the door.

"Advance! The position's ours!" was Bachelor John's over-confident reply.

The next moment—*tap, tap, tirrap!* went Watty's knuckles on the door, with an assumed vigour and self-confidence which the shaky condition of his mind scarcely warranted.

On opening the door, Jean glowered—literally glowered—at the sight of her guidman with recruit ribbons tied to his bonnet, and a real gun on his shoulder, finding, for the moment, no words to fitly express her amazement.

Taking an adroit advantage of her baffled silence, the heroic Watty strode into the kitchen as loftily and courageously as his short stature and secret nervous alarm would permit of, leaving his friend standing on the stair-head, behind the door.

"Jean," he began, not choosing to sit down; "Jean, you've dune the trick for me at last!"

"What's that, Watty?"

"I've tooken the shillin'; I'm 'listed!"

"Wha has been gi'en the buddy drink?" was her crushing reply, followed up by a skirl of derisive laughter.

"It's nae laughin' maitter, Jean. I've come to tak' a last fareweel o' ye—*for ever!*"

"Watty Wilson! Watty Wilson! an' has it come to this!" cried Jean; "*you* 'listed into the sodgers! Five feet naething a sodger! Cast aff yer ribboned bannet; pit aside that custock aff yer puir auld crookit shoother—that I'm sure's sair wi' the wecht o't—and sit quately doon to yer pease-brose."

"Present the gun at the jaud, Watty, that'll fricht her into submission," whispered the defeated husband's guide, philosopher, and friend, from behind the shelter of the door.

"Ye muckle elephant that ye are," sang out Watty, levelling the gun at her; "if ye taunt me ony further I'll put a brace o' bullets through yer brisket!"

Watty was not quite sure what the word "brisket" inferred, or whereabouts the "brisket" was physically located, but he had come across the word in story phraseology, and, as it sounded big and formidable, he thrust it at her entire, in the hopes of securing a speedy capitulation at the enemy's hands.

"Ye demented buddy that ye are!" screamed the domestic virago; "wad ye daur to level firearms at *me!*" and wheeling adroitly about, she seized a heavy potato beetle, and made a dash at the shivering Queen's recruit.

"Ground yer arms!" sang out Watty in the last extremity of mortal terror; "ground yer arms, or feth, I'll *circumsplode* ye!" Watty obviously meant to affirm that he would blow her to pieces, but in the agony of his terror, his language, like his wits, had got inextricably mixed up.

In a moment the angry woman had driven aside the formidable-looking musket, and was instantly on her husband's unprotected "tap," and the next moment poor Watty found himself flung out bodily on the stairheid, *minus* the musket, and all bruises and aching sores.

Believing that his friend, Bachelor John, was still inside, Watty mentally commiserated his fearful fate, and rushed downstairs in quest of needed help.

"She'll batter him into blue lumps!" he sorrowfully sighed, as he hurried forth to regain the open street.

At the "close mouth" he was more than astonished to find his philosophic "support" vigorously blowing a police-call for assistance.

"In the name o' a' that's uncannie, hoo cam' ye there, Johnny? Did the jaud throw ye owre the back window?"

"Watty, I'll never be able to tell hoo I got doon the stairs. I'm here, thank guidness, an' that's a' I'm sure o'. But, Watty; whaur's the gun?"

"Up i' the hoose; I had nae time to think o't. It was awfu' work for twa-three seconds. The gun's——"

"What! in her possession, Watty?"

"In her possession—defeat o' the British!—victory o' the enemy!—and great capture o' military stores! Gang ye up an' beg the gun aff her, Johnny."

"Beg the gun aff her! No, no; not for ten thousand worlds, Watty; not for ten thousand worlds!"

That night poor Watty lost hope and courage entirely, and refused to be comforted. He had challenged his wife, and had been beaten ignominiously, and his philosophic "support" sent flying hence. So he resolved, poor man, to find his meals and lodgings outside till such time as he concluded on Jean's dragoon-wrath having settled down.

But—"No! no! Watty; ye'll dae naething o' the kind," put in Bachelor John. "Ye'se share my bed for this nicht,

an' the morn's nicht we'll try anither game wi' Jean—attack her frae some ither point of vantage—perceive ?"

"Oo, ay, I *perceive* weel enough," frankly answered Watty; "but I choose to be the commanding General this time, wha stan's at a safe distance surveying and directing the attack thro' a lang telescope."

"Wheesht, wheesht, Watty; there's nane o' us 'll hae to gang under fire this time. The enemy has captured our gun at the point o' the tattie-beetle, it is true, and the position is clearly Jean's, nae doot. But, hark ye, lad; I've hit on a plan to work the oracle wi' her.'

"An' what's that ? '

"It's this, Watty; ye ken big Fechtin' Jock o' Bruiser Lane ?"

"Brawly," replied Watty, "an' my jaw kens him tae, as weel. He clooted my chafts yae nicht, just for fun, as he ca'd it, an' sent me into the middle o' the following week wi' the speed o' a sixpenny telegram !"

"Weel, Watty," proceeded his philosophic friend, "I'll get Fechtin' Jock to come alang for a dram, an' we'll pit him up to the game, which 'll be this—You an' him 'ill gang up to Jean the morn's nicht; an' ye'll cry out—'Open the door, Jean, till I lether ye!' Then ye'll slip a wee bit back into the dark o' the lobby, leavin' Fechtin' Jock stan'in' in yer place before the door. Out'll come Jean, bouncin' an' threatenin' yer verra life—the tattie-beetle in her han', an' then Fechtin' Jock 'll fa' upon her, an' wallop her weel, an' that tae before she has time to see in the dark o' the lobby wha deals the blows. Then, when she's fairly floored, Jock 'll withdraw wi' a jump, an' in you'll slip, Watty, stan'in' boldly owre her wi' up-buckled sleeves, an' a' panting wi' exertion and excitement, as if ye had jist that moment struck her the finishin' blow, waitin' impatiently to hear her first expressed word o' repentance an' domestic submission."

"It looks gran' in theory," answered Watty, "but in

practice it 'll prove a risky job. Hoosumever, if Fechtin' Jock disna mind a fractured skull owre much, an's willin' to come, then, death or life! I'll risk it."

Imagine, then, to-morrow night come round, and the fateful hour at hand. Fechtin' Jock's services have been secured, and Watty and his highly ingenious friend, are on their way to what, in military parlance, we may here call "the front."

Watty is only half sure of the game, and his heart is thumping excitedly against his sides with the swing of an eight-day clock pendulum, notwithstanding the fact that, within the hour previous, he has swallowed three full glasses of Campbeltown whisky!

"Keep up yer pecker, Watty," puts in Bachelor John, "immortal glory, honour, and domestic house-sovereignty await ye. Ye'll come oot o' this adventure a local and domestic Lord Wolseley, and be voted for the remainder o' yer life a potato-beetle peerage, wi' a grant o' unlimited pease-brose a' the week, an' a tea breakfast on Sunday mornings. Fechtin' Jock, there, is richt able for his work."

"Yes!" exclaimed the fighting man, "I'll smartly turn on her claret tap, tingle the ivories in her potato box, and confound her eyesight and understanding in a jiffey."

"For your ain sake, my man, as weel as for that o' a' concerned, jink the tattie-beetle," cautioned Watty. "Yae weel-planted blow frae Jean would remit ye to anither and —let me piously hope—a higher sphere; but cannie, lads; we're here at the dreaded stair-fit yince mair."

"Courage, Watty, courage!" sang out the philosopher, "resolution is the half of success! Why fear the result? The ball rolls well. Let the cry be—On! on! Forward! Death or victory!"

"Ay, imph!" sneered the unassured husband, "an' what pairt are ye gaun to play in the bluidy drama, Johnny? It's a' very fine to stan' behind a door an' cry oot—'On! on! Forward! Death or victory!' But, kennin' the enemy's

mettle as I dae, it's a vera different thing to march into a death's den an' withstan' the fierce haffet-clawin' o' an enraged woman."

"Oh, ye ken, Watty, I'll stan' by ye as a 'support.' Victory is often assured by a timely moving to the front o' the reserved 'supports,' ye ken."

"Ay," thocht Watty to himsel'; "ye'll be gaun to act as a *flying* column, I suppose," but he didn't venture to speak out the sarcasm.

"Now, Watty, ye'll demand the gun, in stern, commanding tones, *outside the door*, immediately the 'chapp' is given," explained Bachelor John, as the detachment cautiously ascended the stair; "an' you, Jock, ye'll be ready to floor her before she sees what's what, ye un'erstan' ?"

"I'll close up her 'daylights' pop, pop!" significantly answered Fechtin' Jock.

"If I could only manage to mak' my heart lie still" lamented the excited Watty. "It's fleein' aboot my breist like a new-caught bird in a cage."

"Courage; the day is ours! Sound the advance!" resolutely whispered the philosophic organiser of the expedition. "Now, lad, lay your knuckles firmly against the panel o' the door."

Thump, thump, thump, went Fechtin' Jock's shut fist against the door, and a moment after the voice of Jean was heard rumbling inside somewhere, like rising thunder.

"Wha's that layin' their ill-set feet against my door?" she cried from within.

"*My* door," thought Watty to himself; "she still claims the hoose as hers! Feth, an' we'll ha'e a teuch fecht for possession, I see."

Thump, thump, thump, was repeated on the shaken door-panel by way of answer to her question, and the next moment the voice of Watty was heard tremulously palpitating on the dread silence—

"Open—the—door, Jean; I com—mand ye!"

"What! an' that's you, Watty, that's thumping sae impidently at my door? Ye wee five feet, soor-dook sodger! 'Od, if I rise frae my sate I'll clash your chafts wi' a wat dishcloot!"

"Demand the gun, Watty," the voice of the philosophic commandant was heard shouting from somewhere behind the kitchen door; "demand the immediate and unconditional surrender and restoration of the gun!"

"I demand," blurted out Watty, "I demand the im-im-immediate and undivisional sur-sur-surrender and conspli-cation of the g-g-gun. Give me the g-g-gun!"

"Gi'e *you* the gun, ye wee morsel that ye are! I'll mak' firewood o't first. If ye treat me to ony mair o' yer sma' jaw, I'll rise an' wring the bit neck o' ye."

"The gun, woman, the gun!" demanded Watty, strengthened into firm speech and daring by the re-assuring words of the philosophic commandant.

"It's the gun ye want," answered the storming virago; "but I'll treat ye to the tattie-beetle."

"The tattie-beetle!" yelled out the alarmed Watty, his hair galvanised into erect birses with perfect fright.

"Stand fast. Victory or glorious death!" sung out the commandant from behind the door.

"Lordsake, here she comes! It's you an' her for't now, Jock!" cried Watty, darting like lightning into a recess of the dark lobby. "Into her, but tak' care o' yer skull."

A moment after the door flew open, and—there was a scuffle, a series of yells, and a collapse of something heavy on the floor.

Watty dashed in as the victorious pugilist withdrew, and stood valiantly over his prostrate wife, who was half-blinded with confusion and facial derangement.

"D'ye want ony mair o't?" coolly inquired Watty, assuming a lofty air, although his heart was going like an

express engine. "If sae, just tell me afore I pit doon my shirt sleeves?"

"Oh! oh! oh! Watty Wilson! Watty Wilson! To think ye wad ha'e sae abused your ain lawfu' wife—at your ain fire-en', tae. Oho! oho! oho!"

"*My* ain fire-en'," soliloquised the much-delighted Watty. *My* ain fire-en'! 'Od, that's a sweet bit to row in a married man's mouth. Jean, yer han' on't. I'm sorry for the thrashin' I've gi'en ye. But, lass, my temper got clean the better o' me, an' I couldna restrain my han's. When fairly roused, an' on my mettle, Jean, I've the strength o' thirty-six African lions! But wheesht, wheesht, lass; dinna tak' it sae sair to heart. If it's a bargain atween us that I'm to *rule* an' you're to *serve*, then there's my han' on't, an' I'll never lift it against my loving and respected wife again. What say ye, Jeannie?"

"The sodgers! the sodgers!" cried out the conquered wife. "They'll come an' steal ye awa' frae yer ain loving Jeannie!"

"Say the word, an' it's no too late yet."

"Yes! yes!" sobbed Jean.

"Yer han' on't, then."

"There!"

"An' noo, Jeannie, I'll aff an' awa' back to the barracks wi' the gun."

"Tak' it oot o' my sicht, Watty; an' oh, tak' care o' yersel' wi't, an' dinna be owre lang awa' frae yer ain loving doo. I'll be lonely till ye come back."

"In a crack, Jeannie, I'll be back to kiss an' comfort ye —my ain sweet lovey!" answered the delighted Watty; and I have only to add, in conclusion, that twa happier domestic doos than Watty Wilson and Jean Jamieson dinna at this day dab kisses frae ilk ither at ony fireside in braid Scotland.

SANDY M'TARTAN'S VISIT TO THE SHOWS.

SANDY M'TARTAN, and his loving spouse, Kirsty, paid a visit to the "Shows" last year, and turned oot twa o' the greatest curiosities to be seen there.

Arriving at the spot, they very soon found themselves part and parcel of the densely-packed crowd, and, like other sight-seers, were jostled and hustled hither and thither with ceaseless repetition.

To avoid separation, Kirsty "cleekit" Sandy, and hung upon his arm like a firmly glued and dove-tailed fixture. M'Tartan observed to Kirsty that the crowd was a mixed one, as they struggled through it, but Kirsty, with outspoken humour, flatly declared that there was "nae mixtures aboot it, for it was entirely made up o' Gleska keelies."

"Weel, then, Kirsty, let's get inside some 'Show' to be clear o' them."

"Na, na, guidman; that wad be jumpin' oot o' the fryin' pan into the fire. We'll keep in the air—ootside."

So they wandered hither and thither with the swaying crowd, and got glimpses of pictorial advertisements of many wonderful and curious pennyworths to be witnessed inside. Irish giants who could light the streets of Dublin without the help of a ladder; and Yankee tall men who, for a challenge of £100, could for height "flop" all creation. Wherever a giant was on exhibition, a dwarf, by way of contrast, was invariably the second feature of the establishment. Then, there were also to be seen people with two heads, and women with full-grown beards; animals with too many legs, and animals with too few; acting monkeys, and speaking fish; intelligent and calculating ponies, and star mammoth pigs; knock-me-out Sallys, and knock-me-down nine-pins; merry-go-rounds driven by engines, and organs going by

steam; stands covered with icebergs of ice-cream, and tables smoking with "blows of hot peas;" ascending London boxes, and high-flying swings; tents of pantomime fun, and booths of bleeding tragedy; waxworks, sparring booths, circuses, menageries, wizards' tents and hobgoblinscopes, with almost every other conceivable and inconceivable incongruity. Each booth had a great front of highly-coloured picture-canvas, illustrative of the scenes and wonders to be seen inside. The menageries especially were rich in pictorial display. At the stair-way of one of the largest "collections" a crier stood, who, with the aid of a good voice and a long tapered stick, with a tassel made of strips of coloured cotton adorning the top end of it, called frequent attention to a tremendous-looking picture of—

"The great Hafrican lion, Nero, the pride hov the forest! —the huntameable monarch hov the Hafrican wilds, gen'l'men, as has heaten and swallered six h-alive keepers within the past four years! To be seen h-alive, gen'l'men, to be seen h-alive! No waiting! no delay!"

With the expiry of each half-dozen words, the "crier" flopped the canvas picture with his stick, said picture representing the "pride hov the Hafrican forest" in the act of swallowing an "h-alive keeper."

"Supposing we gang in and see the African 'monarch o' the wuds,' Kirsty, eh?"

"Na, na, guidman; I'll e'en dae naething o' the kind; the fearsome britt micht tak' a fancy for you or me for supper. Let's move roond wi' the crood."

"Weel, let's try the 'acting monkeys,' Kirsty; they'll no eat us alive, surely. They ha'e a born genius for crackin' a nit, but I never heard o' yin o' them takin' waur liberties wi' a man-body than chowin' the button aff his coat."

"Gae awa' wi' you an' yer monkeys," retorted Kirsty; "nesty, itchy britts; I hate the vera sicht o' them!"

"Weel, try a gless o' ice-cream," insisted M'Tartan.

"It wad raise the tuithache in my three auld stumps."

"Try a bowl o' het pease, then."

"It wad develop the win' on the stammack."

"Here, then," said M'Tartan, excitedly, "haud oot yer haun'. There's a penny; get on the back o' a hobby-horse for five minutes, while I try a roond wi' the gloves," and before Kirsty had time to wink, M'Tartan had darted inside of a sparring booth, where some Birmingham men were showing how human eyes may be successfully discoloured, and noses scientifically put out of shape.

Kirsty was paralysed with astonishment. She looked up at the announcement of the performance on the canvas over the door, and saw that each entertainment wound-up with a regular "set-to" between the "Birmingham Cock" and the "Belfast Chicken," these being the professional sobriquets of the two leading men of the sparring establishment.

"Eh, me," quo' Kirsty to hersel', "and he's really in to see a cock-fecht! Fine wark for a Scotchman and a Christian!" and she resolved to stand by for a time, mentally determined that a second fecht between a certain domestic cock and hen would be openly instituted on his return.

Meantime M'Tartan had got himself well placed next the "ropes," and the audience having been invited to take a turn at the "gloves," M'Tartan boldly challenged the "Birmingham Cock" to a bout, the more so that the English pugilist had just knocked down a "kiltit sodger" twice his own weight, who had ventured to face him. The honour of Scotland was thus at stake, and our hero was prepared to vindicate it at all personal risk. M'Tartan, as may well be imagined, was a rare sight to see when he had laid aside his stick and coat and donned the formidable-looking "gloves."

"Noo, lead aff, my cockie," he remarked, "an' nae hittin' below the belt. I'll dust yer winkers, my man, an' that

afore twa ticks. There, tak' that!" and driving out his right fist at the Birmingham man, that "expert" smartly drew aside his head, and allowed M'Tartan's blow to waste its virtue on the unresisting air, complimenting him, at the same time, with a stiff one on the bread-basket, which sent Sandy outside the "ropes," and into the arms of the laughing spectators.

"'Odsake, the birkie can hit!" was M'Tartan's exclamation on being set up on his pins; "but if he has scored the first knock-doon blow, I'll draw the first bluid. Come on, my man; tippence for first bluid!"

Again M'Tartan shot out his hand, and again, quick as light, his *understandings* went uppermost, and he came down on the sawdust, this time on his bulky posterior.

A roar of laughter succeeded, which M'Tartan heeded not. Rubbing the dust from his eyelids, he once more valiantly confronted his lithe and wary enemy.

Humorously warning him to "mind his left e'e, as he was gaun to illuminate that organ," M'Tartan tried a swinging side-blow at his opponent's right ear. The Birmingham man ducked cleverly, with a faint smile, and M'Tartan, amidst shouts of laughter, whirled three times round on his heel, and fell pop down on the saw-dust floor for the third time.

The audience laughed aloud, and, dropping his gloved hands by his side, so also did the "Birmingham Cock." But his triumph was of brief duration. A commotion was presently seen amongst the spectators, and a peculiar *skreigh* of excitement told M'Tartan that Kirsty was within the booth. Such was indeed the case; and a moment after the redoubtable Kirsty was inside the "ring," and had broken her auld umbrella over the Birmingham man's head.

"*Ye* wad knock doon ma guidman, ye vagabond that ye are!" she exclaimed, following him up all round the ring, amidst shouts of laughter. "Dod, an' I get ye, I'se thraw the neck o' ye, ye keelie-looking craitur that ye are!"

"Does the old 'missus' want a 'go'?" asked the Birmingham man, throwing himself into fighting position.

"Ay; haud ye there, fechtie, till I get at ye!" exclaimed Kirsty, uplifting her damaged umbrella menacingly for a second blow.

But "fechtie," perceiving the humour of the situation, dropped his fists, and precipitately retired from the ring. And thus, by an apparent paradox, the "cock" having fled the spot, Kirsty virtually became the hen of the walk.

"Kirsty!" cried M'Tartan, adjusting his deranged apparel, "this way, lass, afore ye affront me," and the heroic pair were presently outside the booth.

"What for did ye interfere?" resumed M'Tartan, as they made for the outside of the crowd; "twa minutes mair o't, an' I wad ha'e poother't the birkie's pow wi' some swankin' blows. As it is, I've sent the chiel hame wi' a sarkfu' o' sair banes, I'm thinkin'! The cock-a-doodle craw o' him was jist mair than I could stan'."

"Sair banes or no sair banes," answered Kirsty, "I'm confident the birkie has a gey sair heid the noo. But I'm clean vext for my guid auld umbrella—the handle's fairly broken in twa."

"Here, Kirsty!" suddenly exclaimed M'Tartan, "let's try a shot at the 'Lang Rifle Range' before we leave the grun'. I'm itchin' to 'pap' the bull's-eye."

"Pap yer wa's hamewards, guidman; ye're no safe to be left alane in a crood like this. See, here's the tram-car waitin' on us; in wi' ye." And ere M'Tartan had time to expostulate, the amusing pair were inside the car and whirling westwards towards home.

END OF FIRST SERIES.

Scotch Readings

Scotch Readings

Humorous and Amusing

SECOND SERIES

By

Alexander G. Murdoch

Author of "Recent and Living Scottish Poets"

"A merrie buke's guid companie"

SECOND EDITION

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PREFACE.

IN issuing a second series of *Scotch Readings*, the author desires to thank both the press and the public for the kind and encouraging reception accorded to the first series which was issued last year, and is already in the third edition.

This very gratifying measure of success has encouraged him, to still further exercise his fancy in the same popular direction, and he hopes that the present series may be accorded, a similar reception on the part of the reading public.

The literary merit requisite for such productions is not necessarily high. Of this the author is well aware. At the same time, literature of this class will be read and heartily enjoyed by a large section of the public, who, from the arduous nature of their employment, or for other reasons, have not the time or taste necessary for the perusal of works of a more elaborate and pretentious nature, and which often remain unread and neglected.

The scenes depicted in the following pages are exclusively Scotch, both in character and detail. They are all cast in that humorous vein, in which broad laughter predominates, a distinct merit in itself in these hurried and exciting days of wear and tear, when business, worry, and care, press so heavily on men's minds.

The truth of the modern aphorism, that there is no particular merit in a book being seriously unreadable, was never more forcibly apparent than now, and on this latter point, the author believes, the most censorious of readers will be at one with him.

GLASGOW, *January*, 1888.

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Scotch Readings.

SECOND SERIES.

JOHNNY GOWDY'S FUNNY PLOY.

If ye've half an hour to spare, I'll tell ye the story o' Johnny Gowdy's funny ploy ; for, altho' it's a grave story, it's at the same time a gey merry yin, and's weel worth the kennin'.

"There's a snell nicht, Mysie," said Robin Tamson, yarn merchant in the auld Candleriggs, as he presented his rubicund countenance and portly well-preserved form inside the narrow doorway of Johnny Gowdy's wee tobacco and snuff shop at the foot of the High Street of Glasgow, one chill wintry night some eighty years ago, when the law regarding debt and imprisonment was very different from what it now is.

"A rale nippin' December nicht, atweel," responded Mysie, wife of Johnny, "an' it strikes me we'll hae a fa' o' snaw before daylicht the morn."

"'Deed, lass, I widna winder, an' if it brings a wee hue o' heat wi't, it's comin's welcome. Fill that, Mysie ; ye ken my likin'." And the customer placed a silver snuff-box on the small counter to be substantially replenished.

"Licht broon an' macabaw, I suppose ?" asked the tosh shopwife.

"Are ye speirin' my taste that way, Mysie? O'd, if Johnny himsel' was here he'd ken better, I'm thinkin'. He's as familiar wi' my taste in snuff as he is wi' the face o' the auld Tolbooth clock. What's cam' owre the loon the nicht?"

"Oo," replied the shopwife, proceeding to replenish Robin's box, "he's snug seated in the back kitchen there, readin' awa' at the papers, an' up to the tap o' his twa lugs in the French wars."

"Cry him ben, Mysie."

A moment after and Johnny "himsel'" was at the back of the counter, full of inquiring wonderment, the "papers" still in his hand, and his auld flint specks thrown up on his bald and shining brow. Johnny was a short, podgy body, of a somewhat humorsome turn, a sort of short comedy in home-spun hodden-grey, with a persistent disposition to close one eye when tickled—which was often—and laugh with the rest of his features.

"Robin Tamson!" he exclaimed, "is it possible ye're oot in sic a nose-nippin' nicht as this is! O'd, laird, I hope ye've left yer croighley hoast ahint ye at yer ain fire-en', for it's no for exposure on a frosty December nicht like this."

"Ye may weel say't, ye may weel say't, Johnny; but the mist's aye waur than the frost for a hoast, ye ken. It's the neb o' my nose that suffers the nicht; till I had a pinch o' Mysie's famous mixin', my nose was just as cauld when I first cam' into the shop here as the 'black boy' ye hae as a signbrod above yer door-heid. Here, Johnny, tak' a dip."

"Ay!" continued Robin, half to himself and half aloud, while Johnny helped himself at the box, Mysie, meantime, having moved off a bit to serve another customer—"there's waur than coughs an' cauld noses in this world," and receiving back the box from Johnny, he re-applied himself to its comforting contents so vigorously as to cause his concerned cronie to ask—

"What ava's the maitter—onything wrang, Robin?"

"A's wrang thegither, Johnny," replied Robin; "Deacon Spreull's gaun to bring my worldly a' to the hammer, an' sen' me to the Tolbooth. Hae ye an hour to spare wi' me up-bye in auld Jenny Middleton's Tontine taproom, Johnny?"

Johnny jerked his thumb in the direction of his spouse, Mysie, who was busy with a wife customer at the far end of the counter, and closing his left eye, suggested strong doubts on the subject.

"Is't no at a' possible, Johnny, think ye?"

"We'll try her, Robin, we'll try her," and then, turning to his spouse, he said—"Mysie, I'll need to gang oot a wee while, I fear."

"Noo, Johnny——!"

"It's a' richt, Mysie, it's a' richt an' ticht; no a drap, lass, believe me, no a drap 'll cross my craig this blessed nicht! The fack is," he continued, with a fluency of invention which would have made the fortune of a novelist, "the French have jist landed on a hill at the back o' Camlachie, the laird here tells me, an' they're likely to be in the toon playin' Tom an' Herry wi' a'thing the morn's mornin'."

"The Lord help us!" cried Mysie, unconsciously skailin' a haill skipfu' of snuff which she was in the act of serving to a customer. "O'd, I hope they'll no come doon the High Street."

"I hope no, Mysie," continued the facetious snuff-dealer; "but I'll hae to gang awa' roon to the Council Chambers alang wi' Robin, an' see the Provost an' the Bailies a bit; for a' the toon burgesses are to be summoned there this nicht for the protection o' the city, an' we'll maist likely be served oot wi' a baton or a musket, to gie the bit puddock-eatin' French bodies a fell threshin' when they come."

"Eh, me, the Lord keep us!" sighed the terror-stricken Mysie. "D'ye think I should pit on the window-brods?"

"It wad be safer," said Johnny. "I wad almost bid ye

strike a compromise between war and business by pittin' on the 'brods' hauf an' hour earlier the nicht; say half-past nine instead o' ten o'clock; an', Mysie, dinna wait up for me. The foreign loons 'll no be here before ten o'clock the nicht, Robin—eh?"

"Oo, the shop windows are perfectly safe till ten o'clock the nicht; hoo lang they may remain sae's anither question," responded Robin, as the pair prepared to depart.

"See an' tak' care o' yer skin, Johnny, an' no be brocht hame to me on a shutter, wi' yae leg shot aff an' the tither only hauf on—mind ye!"

"Death or glory!" cried back the gallant snuff-dealer, and the twa bosom cronies thereafter passed out into the chill street, and turning the corner of the Cross steeple, they immediately sought the seclusion and comfortable cheer offered nightly at auld Jenny Middleton's snuggery situated at the head of the once famous "Tontine Closs."

Arrived in Jenny Middleton's, there the twa cronies found Willie Campbell, a "grocer buddy," who own'd a thriving wee Jenny-a'-thing shop at the head of the auld Sautmarket, cornering the east end of the Trongate. Willie kept everything saleable in stock, and a few things more, but would answer to no trade designation but the very respectable one of "grocer," his auld faither, decent, worthy man, having been that before him. Willie was a gleg, eident, thrifty, honest sort of a body, inheriting a useful talent for making twopence out of a penny. Willie, therefore, had about equal credit in kirk, bank, and market, and being in addition a toon burgess, he was personally and in numerous other ways "nae sma' beer."

"An' hoo's his lairdship haudin'?" Willie asked, and Robin's answer was prompt and significant:—

"Deil ill, Willie, an', what's worse, no like to be better! Financially, I'm jist an auld cask in the han's o' a fell cooper, an' it's a hanging question whether they'll ca' the

bottom clean oot o' me or gie me anither chance an' 'girr' me up anew."

"Wha's the cooper, Robin?" significantly asked the Sautmarket grocer.

"Deacon Spreull, o' the Stockwell."

"Then, the bottom's already oot o' ye, Robin," rejoined the other.

"That's what I'm fell fear'd o'," put in Johnny Gowdy, "the Deacon's mercy's like the North Pole, it's kin' o' cauld awee, an' tho' it's believed to exist it has never yet been yince seen."

"Ye've said it, Johnny, ye've jist said it," acceded the yarn merchant with a heavy sigh, "I'm this nicht, I fear, naething better than jist a gone cask. The grim auld Deacon has me completely in his power. I'm hopelessly involved—bonded, mortgaged, post obited, and, in fact, generally and completely water-logged; an' hoo to come oot o't, or hoo to escape the jile (gaol) is mair than I can even imagine, let alane soberly reason oot. Hech-howe! this is a crookit warld when the penny 'll no rin richt," and the troubled yarn merchant dived his fore-finger and thumb into the centre of his well-filled box, and liberally replenished his capacious nostrils, which had unusually fine accommodation for snuff.

"Gor, laird, an' are things owre bye in the Can'leriggs as bad as that?" asked the Sautmarket grocer, his hair rising on end; and presently adjusting his spectacles he looked interestedly at the yarn merchant, as if searching there for facial proof of the impending financial disaster.

"As bad, an' even waur, Willie," rejoined the all but broken man of yarn, "the Deacon maun hae his money immediately, or he threatens to roup me oot—stick an' stow."

"Weel," put in Johnny Gowdy, "it's e'en a black frost wi' ye if ye're to lippen to the tender mercies o' Deacon Spreull. The Deacon, it's baith weel an' wide ken'd, is a

hard creditor; he could 'whussle' a psalm tune an' skin a debtor alive. As faur as I can see, there's naething for ye, Robin, but to conveniently dee; that's the sair logic o' the position," and the adviser closed his left eye, and laughed with the lee side of his face.

"Dee!" exclaimed both the yarn merchant and the Saut-market grocer in a single breath.

"Ay dee, Robin; to escape the Deacon's grup ye'll be obleeged to e'en dee."

"Dee at just sixty!" retorted the man of yarn, "fack no, I'll no try that trick yet; I'm e'en sixty, as I say, but, according to Scripture, I've ten years guid to the fore yet; an', mair than that," he continued, "I've a solid kist here (tapping his stout chest) an' a bit o' soond clock-wark here (touching his deeply-furrowed brow) which should gi'e me a firm haud o' life till eichty guid. I'll dee to pleesure neither deil nor deacon!"

"Hoots man! ye dinna unnerstan' me, Robin. There's only yae way o' being born, but there's fifty ways o' gettin' to heaven, an' still mair ways o' leavin' this worl'. To illustrate my meaning, a man that's sair pressed an' pitten tae can conveniently dee by proxy, or by hoaxy, ye unnerstan'."

"By proxy, or by hoaxy!" interjected the perplexed man of yarn.

"Baith ways," persisted the snuff dealer, "break in business the morn, Robin, dee suddenly the next day, an' come to life again in Greenock the week after. Willie there, an' mysel', 'ill see that ye're decently coffined an' interred; an' if ye're anxious for posthumous fame, we can e'en pit up a bit canny stane owre ye, an' tell as big a lee about yer piety as ithers. Listen:—

HERE LIES

ROBIN TAMSON, Yarn-merchant in the auld Can'leriggs o' Glasgow, who departed this weary sojourn thro' a wicked

wilderness o' thorns, to enter a better life—at Greenock! Much respected; deeply regretted, etc., etc.

> His yarn is broke: his hank is spun:
> His fecht is focht: his race is run!"

"Weel, laird," resumed the ingenious snuff-dealer, "are ye gaun to tak' my grave advice—an' dee to escape the jile?"

"I'm a corp before this day week, Johnny, I may as weel dee in my bed as be killed on the street by the French—eh," laughingly rejoined the man of yarn.

So, it was there an' then definitely fixed and arranged that Robin Tamson, toon burgess and yarn merchant, in the Candleriggs, should, in view of extreme possibilities, die an' be buried by "hoax-y," as had been humorously suggested, on an agreed day of that week, and should, by some spiritualistic transmutation, come to life again in Greenock the week following and so end his years in peace and financial comfort. Thereafter the three friends separated.

Things had gone all right thus far, when, in the course of the next afternoon, a rap-tap-tap came to the yarn merchant's door, which was promptly answered.

"Weel, mistress," said Johnny Gowdy to the deceased yarn merchant's widowed spouse, as he and Willie Campbell stood together at the door of the bereaved house; "hoo are ye stannin' yer sair heart-trial?" and half-closing his left eye, Johnny threatened laughter with the remainder of his face, a result which the gravity of the situation alone forbade.

"Oo, just come yer wa's in; I'm haudin' fairly. I hope I see ye baith weel?"

"Oh, Peter Dumdick!" merrily put in Willie Campbell, "we're baith thrivin' like spring cabbages—fresh-lookin' an' overflowin' wi' usefu' blossom," an' there an' then the worthy pair passed gravely inside.

"An' hoo's the corp, Betty?" resumed the snuff-dealer, as the pair followed the mistress of the house upstairs. "I was speirin' after the corp, Betty; ye're absent a wee."

"Oo, the healthiest corp I ever saw or heard tell o'," truthfully answered the "widow," "put owre a pund o' pope's eye steak to its dinner the day, was unco sair on the toddy bowl, an's jist fell mad for snuff; a thrivin' halesome corp atweel."

"Hillo, Johnny, is this yersel'?" shouted the corpse from the room above. "I ken the sough o' yer hamely voice, an' that o' auld Willie Campbell, tae! Come awa', freens! come awa'! Ye're richt welcome here," and the corpse, with its feet in warm slippers, a pair of horn "specks" across its rubicund nose, an' a snuff-box in its han', heartily invited its late bosom cronies to tak' a dip oot o' its box.

"An' what aboot the ither world, Robin; is the place ocht better than this?" facetiously inquired the snuff-dealer.

"Weel, Johnny, my experience that way is but limited yet; I've never got heicher up than this bit attic bed-room. But atween the three o' us, I wad bate on the comforts o' the Gleska Can'leriggs against a' the worlds I've yet seen or heard tell o', atween this and the Jamaicas. Ye see, Johnny," he humorously added, "a body can aye get a grup o' yarn in the auld Can'leriggs o' Gleska, an' yarn's a healthy reality, altho' I never cam' across the word in Scriptur'."

"Weel," rejoined the snuff-dealer, "ye'se likely to ken mair aboot the ither world before the morn's mornin', Robin; we mean to coffin ye the nicht."

"Hoot-toot-toot!" laughed the deceased man of yarn, "ye're carryin' the joke owre faur, lads."

"It's necessary, Robin," put in the Sautmarket grocer, "absolutely necessary."

"What!" exclaimed the horrified man of yarn.

"Absolutely necessary, as Willie has jist said," insisted the snuff-dealer. "In strict truth, there's nae ither way oot o' the hole; for the Deacon, we've jist learned, hearing o' yer sudden demise, has got decree against yer body corporate, an' has gi'en lang Tam Sinclair, the ill loon, an' his wee man, Jock

Cluggie, instructions to come here the nicht an' arrest yer corp!"

"What!" again exclaimed the deceased man of yarn, and, unable to articulate more, he sat back in his cushioned arm-chair for several moments, the picture of blank astonishment and collapsed nerves.

"Arrest my guidman's corp!" screamed his faithful "widow," who had followed the twa cronies into her husband's bed-room, "before that happens there'll be twa corps in the room—lang Tam Sinclair being yin o' them!" and Mrs. Tamson picked up a fireside poker which was lying handy, and suggestively flourished it in mid-air.

"Stop! stop!" put in the inventive snuff-dealer, "the easiest way's aye the best; we'll try an' sort the thing amang oorsel's, and then let chance an' the deil guide the rest. There's aye twa sides to a question—a richt side an' a wrang yin; and the richt side in this case, Robin, is jist to feenish the grim joke by yer lairdship gettin' inside the kist (coffin), preparatory to the beagle's arrival. The 'box' 'll be here by an' by—it's trysted—an' I fear so will the beagles. We'll need to work the ploy confidentially amang han's; a' in the hoose are in the secret, I suppose?"

The man of yarn nodded dubious affirmation, his mouth still agape.

"Weel," continued the ingenious snuff-dealer, "consent ye to the kistin' (coffining), Robin, an' if lang Tam Sinclair and his dumpy shadow, 'Cluggie' Jock, insist upon sittin' up wi' yer corp a' nicht, yae sepulchral grunt frae ye, or the mere liftin' o' a spectral han' against the can'le licht, winna fail to skail the beagles, an' set yer poinded body free."

"But the 'kistin'' o' me, Johnny," objected the deceased man of yarn, "that's the gruesome part o't."

"Toots, Robin; ye'll be as snug as the snuff in yer box there. What's a coffin after a', but jist a bit o' plain clean fir, newly aff Johnny Wright's plane, an' wi' a bit cleadin' o'

black claith nail't roun't for decency's sake. The case is gruesome a wee, Robin, there's no' a doot o't; but reject it, an' what's the consequences? The deacon 'll pit ye in a stane coffin in the Tolbooth prison-house, an' my certie, that wad be waur than the widden yin."

"That seems to be the only cauld alternative, Johnny," gravely assented the broken merchant.

At this juncture, the deceased man of yarn's "weeping widow," who had shortly left the room, returned thither with a supply of hot toddy, which she placed on the table, and said—

"Ye'll be nane the waur o' a heart-warmin' tumbler o' toddy this freezin' nicht, frien's, the mair sae, that the grim subject ye've in han's aboot as cauld as the air ootside."

The "dram" was indeed a welcome visitant, much more so, as the deceased laird remarked, than either lang Tam Sinclair or the trysted "kist." But they had no more than got richtly "placed" at it, when in the middle of a further elucidation of Johnny Gowdy's comic "plot," a loud knocking was heard at the front door outside. In ten seconds Susan Plooks, the more than middle-aged house domestic, suddenly thrust her head inside the room, exclaiming—

"Guid save's! there's a shirra offisher, an' a wee man wi' cluggs on at the door. The lang chiel has a bit o' paper in his han', an' talks o' 'law,' an' the 'Tolbooth.' I tried to keep him oot; but the lang rascal wad be in, an' the wee yin wasna the eicht pairt o' an inch behint him."

"What!" yelled the deceased man of yarn, "are the beagles in the hoose then, Susan?"

"Oh, sir, I cood nae keep them oot; they're stannin' in the lobby waitin' to 'pin the corp' they say; what's yer orders?"

"Intae yer bed, Robin, instantly," exclaimed the snuff-dealer, "there's no a moment to lose!"

"Mattie," said the deceased laird, addressing his spouse,

"gang ye doon an' keep the loons in play a wee while I get under the blankets, an'—oot o' this weary wilderness o' thorns!"

"Yes, Robin," said his spouse, "but noo that the enemy's inside the castle gates, there's naething left us, I fear, but honourable capitulation; but I'll insist on guid terms, tak' ye nae fear."

Obviously there was now no way of escape save in the carrying through of the grim joke, and to this doubtful end the inmates of the house practically set themselves, and that, too, with an energy and determination which promised high success. The man of yarn was without loss of time denuded of his vitality, and placed in bed as stiff as a poker, the room cleared of the table "cheer," and the candles blawn oot and removed. Thereafter, the twa cronies betook themselves to another room to await the hazardous issue, which, anticipatory of further results was now practically in the hands of the mistress of the house and her domestic servant and confidant, Susan Plooks, a strong, muscular wench. In a very short time Mattie, supported by her confidential domestic, Susan, was down stairs, and boldly confronting the two beagles.

"Weel, gentlemen, what is't ye want? what's yer bisness here at this sair time?"

"Oh, it's legal business we're after, mistress — legal business," Lang Tam replied. "I'm certainly sorry a bit to disturb yer hoose at this trying time, but I have a warrant here (pulling out a piece of paper) to arrest the corpse of—eh—eh—(consulting the paper) Robert Thomson, late yarn merchant in the Candleriggs, an' wi' the trusty help o' my man, Jock, here, I'll dae't, mistress, beyond let or hindrance; an' let wha likes oppose me, it'll be at their ain personal risk, for my faith, Jock an' I will soon lay their feet fast in the auld Tolbooth prison owre-bye."

"Um!" grunted Jock, suddenly bringing down one of his cluggs on the floor with an alarming thump, and

instantly he stuck his two thumbs into the two armpits of his rather loose-fitting waistcoat, and spreading out his large hands, threw himself into an attitude closely resembling the first position in dancing. Now, Jock was the physical opposite of his master ; for while Tam was lang and thin, Jock was wee and stout. Jock, otherwise, was a graphic Scotch study to such as could enjoy the rich humour of odd personal character and dress. He was " heid-theekit " with a Kilmarnock bonnet of great circular dimensions, and which was a sort of family heirloom, having originally been owned and worn by Jock's father—a Gleska carter. He was also stoutly " foundationed " with a pair of enormous cluggs, which had gained him the expressive nickname of Cluggie Jock, while the face, beneath his bonnet, had the consistency and very much the appearance of a well-boiled bread pudding. Regarding Jock's master, Tam Sinclair, he was a tall thin pike of a man, with a cadaverous countenance and a pair of small grey eyes set under bushy heavy eyebrows of sinister aspect. Tam had the sight of only one eye, having, it was said, caught a fatal inflammation in the other by looking through " keyholes" in the ardent pursuit of his peculiar vocation.

" Where is your husband's body, madam ? " authoritatively demanded Sinclair, " I must know, and at once ! "

" Dinna tell the loons whaur, for their impidence, mistress ; I wad daur them first ; at the warst it's but twa to twa," and Susan made the dishcloot fly aloft in the face of Jock, who jumped in his cluggs with anger, and once more threateningly shook the legal " snitchers " at her, grinning angry defiance.

" Let me 'tie' that woman's hands, Sinclair," shouted Jock, no longer able to hold his temper, " she's a wild 'assault and battery' jaud ! "

" A what ? " yelled the stung domestic, " ye'd ca' me a saut and peppery jaud, wad ye ! O'd, my wee man, I'll saut

and pepper ye!" and flying at Jock, she seized him by the collar, and most vigorously clooted his chafts with her unromantic weapon of defence—the "wat dish-cloot."

Instantly there was a mixed and general scuffle, with nervous screamings and loud cries for help, which hurriedly brought out the twa cronies from their place of hiding. The sight that there presented itself was highly ludicrous and amusing. In the centre of the lobby Jock and the valiant domestic were in hard grips, and Susan, who had the best end of the stick, was energetically "clashin' awa'" at poor Jock's pudding cheeks, who was in turn making violent efforts to put her determined wrists within his dreaded snitchers. At the far end of the lobby, near the door, the house dog, a large mastiff was successfully keeping Lang Tam at bay in a corner—Tam excitedly "fechtin'" the furious brute back with his stick and yelling to all and sundry to "cry the desperate britt aff!" In the rescue of Sinclair from the dog, Jock himself had been fatally neglected, and on looking round they found poor "Cluggie" completely *hors-de-combat*—Susan, the valiant domestic, having laid him across her massive knees in real nursery fashion, while she was heartily belabouring him with the awful "dishcloot" on that particular part of the human body where, according to Lord Bacon, a kick hurts honour very much.

"Come, come, gentlemen," began the snuff-dealer in a mollifying tone of voice, "this is a most unseemly squabble, an' a corp in the hoose!"

"I am here to arrest that same corpse!" rejoined Sinclair, reproducing his warrant.

"Oh, ye'll get it, an' welcome," replied the other; "but for decency's sake, gentlemen, please to consider the feelings of the bereaved widow."

Hearing this, Mattie, the bereaved widow, lifted her

apron to her face and wiped away a rebellious tear. Susan, the valiant domestic, would very probably have followed suit with the "dishcloot," but remembering to what an ignominious use it had but a moment before been put in the fundamental threshin' of Cluggie Jock, she loftily abstained from its use.

"Regarding that," said Sinclair,"I must see the corpse, so that I may know it's in the house."

"Ye'll certainly see the body, Mr. Sinclair," said the bereaved widow; "but ye'll maybe exkase my presence. Mr. Gowdy 'ill show ye Robin's corp," and with the corner of her apron she wiped away a second rebellious tear.

"This way, gentlemen," said Johnny Gowdy, and leading the way up, he entered the room, which was but dimly lighted by a single halfpenny "dip," and drawing aside the curtains he showed the deceased laird lying dimly discovered, with an ashen countenance (well rubbed with flour) and an expression of repose on his honest countenance, which plainly proclaimed him to be now at peace with all men, and especially with — Deacon Spruell! He then quickly retired, leaving the two beagles alone in the room.

"Weel, Jock, my man," began Sinclair, "here we at length are, there's the corpse, an' neither deil nor bogle 'ill lift it frae my sicht this nicht. Did ye hear what auld Tamson dee'd o', Jock?" directing his thumb over his left shoulder in the direction of the corpse.

"I didna jist hear," answered Jock, "death's been sae fell busy this winter that folk's no noticin' every case aboot doors. There's a poo'er o' deaths takin' place in the toon enoo; folk are deein' noo that never dee'd afore. Oh, it's nae lauchin' maitter to some folks, I can tell ye. Eh, but that's a wild win' that's blawin' ootside. Did ye hear that 'slash tae' that the muckle airn gate at the closs-mooth gaed the noo?"

"Are ye frichtet for the corpse, Jock, or what?"

"Me frichtet! no a bit; there's a big lump o' the man here," and Jock valiantly struck his breast.

"Well, Jock, we'll gang below; the kitchen 'ill be a heap mair comfortable than this chilly room; but bring doon the bottle and the glasses wi' ye."

"Yes, I'll—I'll—I'll bring the bottle alang wi' me, if ye but tarry a second."

"Follow up then, quick," Sinclair shouted back from the landing, carrying the lantern before him to save his footing.

"Hy! hy! hy!" yelled Jock, ramping his cluggs on the floor as loudly as he could, "come back, Tammas, an' no leave me to fecht my way oot o' a dark room, wi' naething hamelier than a cauld corp in't! Hy, Tammas, whaur are ye?"

"At the stair-fit, Jock; what are ye waitin' on?" cried back Sinclair, briskly pushing his way towards the kitchen.

"Lordsake, if the lang loon hasna left me to graip my way oot! My lamp awa,' tae, an' my bonnet to look for! Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

To simple-minded and credulous "Cluggie" the situation, comic in one view of it, was tragic in the extreme. The room was dark, the hour near midnight when ghosts are most abroad, the rising wind was moaning around the house like an unquiet spirit, and he—Jock—was alone in the room with a corpse! Cautiously, and with bated breath and quickened pulse, he stepped about, searching for his lost bonnet. Once, nay twice! he thought he heard a groan, as if coming from the bottom of some damp underground cellar; a sort of indescribable sound, the expression, obviously, of a being in pain. He started back in alarm.

"L—Lord—sake!" he ejaculated, his knees beginning to sink under him, "talk aboot nice quate corpses? There's a lot o' lowse mistakes in the warld! S—S—Sinclair!!" he shouted aloud, but the only response he heard was the wind

outside shaking the old casements and slamming with weird power the big iron gate at the "closs-mouth." His overwhelming inspiration was to cut the spot at once, but then —his lost bonnet! There would have been a fine handle for Sinclair to joke with! His bonnet was not much in itself, although an heirloom in the family; but his courage, nay his very character as a man, and his reputation as a sheriff-officer's assistant was at stake! He couldn't, wouldn't run! The bonnet must be recovered, and his courage established at whatever cost! He looked about once more. Ah! yonder it was! a dark lump, as seen in the dark, at the end of a long white something. Under the mutual inspiration of native courage and raw whisky Jock had for the moment either forgotten or become heedless of the presence of the corpse. So he stepped hastily towards the object, and seized—the dead man's cowl!

"Wha's that!!!" said a low, deep, sepulchural voice, obviously that of the coffined corpse, "wha's that!"

"Ah!—ah!!—ah!!!" yelled the terror-smitten Jock, with chops fallen widely apart, and wheeling about, he dashed blindly out of the spirit-haunted room, reaching the stair-foot in three splendid leaps, where he lay for some moments yelling—"Murder! ghosts! help, Sinclair! help!" In a couple of seconds Cluggie's frantic cries for help brought the astonished Sinclair to the stairfoot.

"Oh, the Lord help us, Sinclair! what a fricht I got! D'ye ken, the corp spoke to me!"

"Ye don't mean it, Jock?" said Sinclair.

"I'm tellin' you its as true's yer stannin' there," earnestly replied Jock, his teeth rattling in his heid like dice in a box.

"Fudge, fudge, that'll no dae, Jock," rejoined Sinclair. "The dram's been makin' ye baith hear an see dooble this nicht."

"Dooble or single, Sinclair. I only wish I saw the auld

tyke's corp daicently at rest in the Ramshorn kirk-yaird."

Ah! there it was again! a noise as of someone walking about in the dead man's shoes overhead!

"There's dootless somebody in the hoose, Jock," said Sinclair, getitng out a short baton emblematic of both authority and defence.

"There's nae doot o' that, Tammas; it's either the corp or its unlaid ghost. Tak' my advice, Sinclair, and fling the job up."

"Never!" rejoined Sinclair, valiant to outward appearance, but tremblingly alive to the peculiar eeriness, not to say horror of the situation. "Fling the job up! an' a' because a starving cat has got intae the hoose an's playin' Herry wi' the collops in the pantry. Never! my reputation, Jock, my reputation!"

"Life before reputation ony day, Sinclair," sincerely said Jock. "I'm for hame oot o' this onyway."

"What! desert the post o' duty, Jock? Never! Come, sir, lift up your lamp, an' follow me! I command ye!"

"Gang on then, Sinclair, in the name o' Beelzebub! Gang on an' I'll—I'll—I'll follow!"

Reaching the foot of the staircase, Sinclair, who was most valiant in leading the van, suddenly stopped short, and turning to his terrified man, Jock, he ordered him to ascend the staircase first.

"Na, na, Sinclair, that cock 'ill no fecht. Ye're the captain o' the company; gang ye up first, an' I'll follow."

"What! frightened, Jock? insubordination? terrification? not possible?"

"Faith ay, Sinclair, I'm no gaun to recklessly risk my nerves, no to say my very life, for eighteenpence; I'll drap the barrow first."

"Coward! follow me!" and therewith, they began to ascend the stair leading to the deceased merchant's bed-room.

At this critical moment, the corpse was seen by both in the act of descending the staircase in its "deid-shirt."

"Good Lord, deliver us?" yelled Jock and, flinging down his lantern, he precipitately fled the spot, reaching the stair-foot in a sort of rolled-up lump.

Nor was the boastful Sinclair long behind him. Endorsing his assistant's active proposition, he promptly seconded it, without even the thought of proposing an amendment.

"Is't hame or the Tolbooth?" hurriedly asked Jock as he gathered together his mixed up limbs and senses.

"The Tolbooth, in the name o' the police!" as quickly answered Sinclair.

In a trice the pair were once more on their lost feet, and were just on the point of making a satisfactory *exit*, when the large mastiff—which had been sleeping below the kitchen bed—rushed to the door, wakened by the tumult, and judging the escaping pair as robbers, the dog made a fierce seizure of Jock's hindquarters tearing away in one large mouthful the whole "seat" of his breeches, their owner being just saved from serious bodily injury by the prompt snap of the closing door.

"Jock," said Sinclair, when the pair had gained the safety of the Candleriggs plainstanes, "it's a mercy ye got yer threshin' frae big Shusie before that thief o' a dowg bit the hinner en' oot o' yer breeches, eh?"

"Um!" snarled Jock, "the dowg's the warst o't."

Sinclair and his man, Jock, never completely recovered the "fricht" they got that night, and they were both stout believers in resurrected ghosts till death.

As for Robin Tamson, he never came to life again in—Glasgow. But an awfu' close likeness to the deceased man o' yarn was for years afterwards in business co-partnership with a son of his in Greenock in the wholesale sugar way, and if ye but "heard the breath" of auld Johnny Gowdy's grandson on the subject, owre a toddy-dram, as I

have often heard, he could maybe tell ye a thing or twa on the matter that wad afford ye anither laugh.

Regarding Jock's "rived awa'" breeches, the "breach," I have heard was never legally repaired; although Jock, I understand, filed a case against somebody in connection therewith in the Camlachie Court o' Session. The case, like the damaged bit in Jock's breeks, was never satisfactorily closed.

Jock, however, pretty successfully mended matters by marrying a widow, getting thereby a new pair o' auld breeks, formerly the property o' her late guidman. The widow's former "man" having been a fine fat fodgel Rug'len Bailie in his day, wi' a wame like a military drum, the breeks, as ye may guess, were a fine, lowse, comfortable fit, Jock wore them till his dying day, and left them as a legacy to his widow, recommending them as a useful marriage present to her third man.

THE MENDIN' O' JOHNNY MACFARLAN'S LUM HAT.

It was a staggering blow to Mrs. Macfarlan's pride as a respectable house-wife, when she was told that her next-door neibor and enemy, Mrs. Howdie, had just tooken a hoose at "the Lairgs" for a hale week; the more so, that she Mrs. Macfarlan was expected to stay at home during the Fair holidays, contenting hersel' wi' a penny voyage to Govan, or a hurl in the car the length o' Anderston and back again to the fit o' the auld Gleska Gallowgate. But that would never do!

Mrs. Macfarlan was a woman of considerable resource, and without unnecessary argument or delay, she at once resolved on checkmating Mrs. Howdie's "nesty, upsettin' pride," and constituting herself equal to the best o' them.

In this spirit Mrs. Macfarlan made up her mind to be conveniently "no-weel," so as to gain her point of getting a hale fortnicht doon the watter, nae less, and when once Mrs. Macfarlan, had definitely made up her mind on a discussed point—domestic or otherwise—her husband, Johnny Macfarlan, was about as good as nobody by way of a resisting buffer.

On awakening next morning Mrs. Macfarlan, poor woman, discovered that "her puir nerves were a' upset," and that naething but a complete change o' air would bring her round to herself again.

Johnny thocht different, and maintained, with considerable show of reason and argument, that her trouble was mostly imaginary, and that she would be all right next day.

But Mrs. Macfarlan had determinedly made up her mind to be ill, and ill she accordingly continued to remain, in spite of all Johnny's proffered herbs and arguments.

There was, therefore, nothing for it but just to submit, and make arrangements for giving poor Mrs. Macfarlan a hale fortnicht doon the watter. For no a single day less than "a hale fortnicht" would Mrs. Macfarlan under the circumstances consent to take.

It was thus agreed that Johnny's better-half and her family should proceed to Rothesay at the beginning of the Fair week, and should stay over the week following, as a means of restoring her suddenly upset health.

The next important matter was the arranging of the general family wardrobe, and that was a big job to handle; for the general family wardrobe, it must be confessed, required almost entire renewal, from Johnny's auld "lum hat" down to the wee'st bairn's shoon! As for Mrs. Macfarlan herself, she was jist on the parish for dress; and Johnny, poor man, was in a somewhat similar pathetic condition.

The situation was therefore very trying, not to say critical. The state of the family purse was anxiously

looked into, and it was found that after allowing so much for lodgings at Rothesay, so much for steamboat fares, and so much for loss of wages, there was only the limited sum of 7s. 9½d. to renew the general family wardrobe so as to make a presentable turn oot, and thereby spite Mrs. Macfarlan's twa bitter enemies and stair-heid neibors, Mrs. Howdie and Mrs. Draggletails.

Johnny, however, did not collapse in weak despair. The situation was indeed desperate, but was not beyond resourceful ingenuity and hope. Johnny had a native genius for arithmetical geometry, and it was destined to come in handy on this occasion, in the subdivision, extension, and minute expenditure of the precious 7s. 9½d., which was all the money that was at the immediate disposal of Mrs. Macfarlan, the worthy domestic treasurer.

"As for me," said Johnny, "I can gang vera weel as I am. My 'wardrobe's' no that ill."

"Yer hat's jist deplorable," answered Mrs. Macfarlan, "it needs turnin', like mines."

"An' nae shame tae't, Betty; it's nine-an'-twenty years, come Fair Friday, since I first wore it at oor waddin'. But, Betty, lass, ye surely dinna mean me to wear my auld lum hat at the coast—eh?"

"An' what for no, ye're surely no ettlin' to put on that ugly twa-faced kep (cap) wi' the skip baith back an' fore? If that's sae, I'll no stir yae fit oot o' the hoose. No, no, Johnny Macfarlan! the neebors maun see that ye're a weel-tooken-care-o', gaucy, respectable guidman; that ye've a wife that studies ye, an' that ye've a dress-hat to pit on wi' the best o' them, when occasion demands it."

"But it's in a deplorable condition, ye say," argued Johnny, "an' what's the yise o' sayin' ony mair aboot it?"

"It can be mended, Johnny; my summer 'straw' has been turn't twice't, an' gumm'd times withoot number; so can your auld hat, Johnny."

"But a man canna vera weel turn an' auld hat," retorted Johnny; "an' as for gumming't, why, of course, that's quite oot o' the question."

"Oo, but it disna maybe exactly need turnin', Johnny; a bit polish wi' the blacklead brush micht restore its original gloss."

"Go you tae Dumbarton, Mrs. Macfarlan! Blacklead a Christian man's hat! Great Christopher! D'ye want to mak' a lookin'-gless o' the bowl o't?"

Oh, weel, Johnny, we'll see, we'll see," rejoined Mrs. Macfarlan, in a mollifying tone of voice. "Ye're an ingenious workman, Johnny Macfarlan, an' ye'll best see what can be dune for yer hat when it's hauled oot wi' ither orras frae ablow the bed. But yer best hat ye must wear at the coast, mind you that! or no a single fit will I stir frae Gleska, doon the watter, or no doon the watter!"

The matter being thus summarily settled by Johnny's "ruling elder," the twa set oot on a visit to Paddy's Market on the Saturday nicht following, alang wi' some nine or ten of their twelve or thirteen weans, to spend in necessaries the 7s. $9\frac{1}{2}$d. at their disposal.

Mrs. Macfarlan carried the purse, and Johnny carried the umbrella—and the wean. Mrs. Macfarlan therefore held the best end of the stick, and maintained undisputed possession of the same throughout the evening.

Reaching Paddy's Market, the display there shown was very ample, and at some points—particularly the bonnet-stands — was perfectly dazzling, and, indeed, "quite temptashous," as Mrs. Macfarlan graphically put it. And, electrified to the length of her ten finger tips, Mrs. Macfarlan nervously clutched her purse, as if she feared the immediate barter of its precious contents. The bonnets, in sober truth were just "quite lovely," and fair "brocht the watter tae the een."

"Eh, man, Johnny, jist you look at that!—there's a

perfect love o' a bonnet !—jist my rale taste ! Eh, but I'd like a bonnet like that ! "

" Ay," drawled Johnny, " green silk, an' a white ostrich feather ! Is't no jist raither a wee lood in the colours for a woman o' your age, Betty ? "

" Oh, ay ! onything's guid enough for me—yer puir neglected wife. I suppose ye'd ha'e the heart to see me wearin' an auld bauchle on my heid, wi' a blacking brush stuck on the tap o't for a feather, ye heartless monster that ye are ! But I'll see the price o' that bonnet this vera nicht ! "

" Oh, buy't if ye like ; I'm jake-easy on't, Betty."

Mrs. Macfarlan did not require much jibing to put her ambitious desire into execution. She at once priced the article, and afterwards proceeded to haggle about the purchase of it—a proceeding which the philosophic Johnny, profiting by former experiences, was able to eye with easy indifference.

Johnny stood aside, and for the space of fifteen minutes Mrs. Macfarlan contested the price demanded ; and, at last, as Johnny more than guessed, he saw the " sale-wife " roll up the identical bonnet, and coolly hand it over to his worthy better-half.

" Weel, ye've bocht it, Betty," was Johnny's resigned salutation as he stepped towards his elated spouse.

" Ay, Johnny ; an' a splendid bargain I've gotten o't. She wanted 15s. for't, as weel she micht ; but I focht her doon to 5s. 11d.—a perfect thief's bargain at the price ! "

" Let me see—5s. 11d. oot o' 7s. 9½d," rejoined Johnny, " that leaves only 1s. 10½d. to renew me an' the weans ! "

Having thus secured for herself a grand new bonnet, Mrs. Macfarlan warmly insisted on Johnny at once taking in hand the repair and renewal of his ain auld lum hat, jist by way of snoddin' himself up a bit, as a man with a defective hat, she maintained, could never be considered " dressed," nae maitter what was his " pit on." So that same night, Johnny instructed his worthy better-half to bring forth the hat.

Johnny broadly surveyed it; saw plainly its wasted nap, its long-departed style, its perished gloss, and the numerous long-standing cracks and bashes, which gave its entire circular surface the configuration of a well-defined map of Lanarkshire.

"Weel, what think ye o't, Johnny ?"

"Weel, I'm no a prood man, Betty; but I'd prefer a hat showing fewer bashes, with a little more gloss on its surface, and with a less allowance of 'rim.' Besides, Betty, the rim, ye see's, parting company wi' the body o't," and Johnny, holding it up to the gaslight, showed truly that the rim was all but parted from the body.

"I'll shoo't thegither wi' a bit black threid, Johnny," suggested Mrs. Macfarlan.

"No; I ken a better way than that, Betty; I'll sort it mysel' wi' a bit gutta percha and a wee taet solution."

"Gutta percha an' solution, Johnny!" exclaimed Mrs. Macfarlan, with unfeigned astonishment.

"Ay; gutta percha an' solution, Betty! Jist ye haud on a wee, an' I'll show ye a bit clever magic," and at once Johnny began preparations for the mending of his auld lum hat, having some odd pieces of gutta percha at hand.

A guid strong fire being one of the first requisites of success, that commodity was put within his use without loss of time. Mrs. Macfarlan put some fresh coals on the fire while the bairns vigorously blew the bellows turn about.

As for Johnny himself, he was actively successful in getting a'thing ready for instant operation. In fact, so methodically and so exhaustively did Johnny go about the business, that his finished arrangements amounted to an obvious genius for organisation and would have secured his promotion at the Admiralty Office if sufficiently made known in that quarter.

The hat under repair was carefully and minutely "prospected," and the situation accurately studied. The rim, it

was true, was all but bidding good-bye to the body of the hat, but a thin strip of gutta percha on the top of a "lick of solution" would "cling the twa thegither nicely," and make "a grand, firm mend o't." So, at least, thought Johnny, and possessing the full courage of his sanguine convictions he at once began active mending operations.

The fire was now blazing finely, and sending out the heat of a miniature blast furnace. A small kitchen poker was rammed into the heart o't, while a fire-airn was sitting on the tap o't, and both articles were already glowing with positive heat. On the end of a fork the auldest laddie was holding against the heat of the fire a small bit of gutta percha, which was already curling and blistering into grand workable condition; while Johnny himself was busy "straiking" the melted solution roun' the inner edge of the rim of his hat with the point of his right fore finger, preparatory to firmly gluin't thegither with the gutta percha. The rest of the family were surveying operations from the centre of the floor with mixed exclamations of wonder and delight, while Mrs. Macfarlan was busy shooin' some "tears" in their newly-washed and ironed frocks and "peanies," in view of their coasting excursion on Fair Monday coming.

"Hand me that gutta percha, Bobbie," said Johnny, as he quickly but carefully put down the hat. "Quick! that's it!"

Getting the soft gutta in his hand, he rolled it into a long thin strip; and without a moment's loss of time twined it carefully round the bottom of the hat where the rim joined.

"Noo, Bobby, the poker oot o' the fire," continued Johnny, warming to his work like a true mechanic. "Ay, that's something like a heat; its jist perfect white. Whew! that was a bleeze!" he added, as the resinous gutta broke into flame under the strong heat of the poker.

Again and again Johnny applied the poker by way of smoothing the "jine," but invariably the melting gutta flamed up and caused him to desist.

"It'll prove a grand mend, Johnny," Mrs. Mafcarlan ventured to remark, "if only the hat hauds out."

"Hauds oot?" repeated Johnny, looking up inquiringly.

"Ay, disna tak' fire like, Johnny."

"Nae fear o' that, Betty; it's already been on fire an' oot again six or eicht times the nicht. Hand me owre that airn aff the fire, Bobbie, an' lift it wi' a wat cloth roun' the handle, for I see even the handle's bleezin' het."

Bobby obeyed his parent's instructions to the letter, and Johnny at once applied the whole flat of the red-hot iron to the side of the hat by way of giving it a final polish and "nice general smooth-owre," as he styled it.

In a moment the sottering gutta-percha broke once more into flame, and, owing to the heated state of the hat and the extra surface of the hot iron applied, the flame refused to be puffed out. Almost instantly the whole hat was in a blaze, and completely upset by the cries of the children and the screams of Mrs. Macfarlan, Johnny losing his nerve threw the blazing hat holus bolus at the back of the fire. The disastrous result was certainly not reckoned on in the remotest way. The great heat of the fire instantly converted the whole hat into a mass of oily pulp, and with a sort of explosive puff it seemed to go bodily up the chimney in one mass of flame. Here was certainly an unlooked-for catastrophe, bad enough in itself certainly, but trifling when compared with the alarming sequel which immediately followed. In two seconds it was evident that the "lum" was on fire!

"Eh, mercy me, Johnny Macfarlan! what's this ye've dune?" screamed Mrs. Macfarlan, throwing her two hands aloft in perfect horror, "is't possible the lum's on fire?"

"Possible, Betty; it's a self-evident fact; spontaneous combustion, Betty, or something o' that sort, resulting frae a suddenly absorbed auld hat!" and the highly philosophic Johnny struck an attitude which looked an ingenious com-

promise between comedy and pathetically bleeding melodrama.

"The guid keep us a'!" cried aloud Mrs. Macfarlan, "we'll a' be burnt alive, as sure as we're breathin'! Oh, I wish I was in Abraham's blessed bosum this nicht!"

"Confound Abraham an' you baith, Mrs. Macfarlan!" was Johnny's spirited rejoinder. "Bring me the saut-box an' a pair o' blankets till I damp oot the lum; and look alive, Betty, before the hale land's on fire!"

There was in truth not a moment to lose. The "lum" was not only on fire, but was positively roaring with flames for its entire length—from the bottom upwards. In fact, so powerfully was the chimney in flames that the whole house was shaking with the vibration caused by the roaring draught that fiercely swept it.

"When did ye last get that vent soopit?" demanded Johnny, as Mrs. Macfarlan handed him the saut-box, his little soul roused into heroic authority by the exciting catastrophe; "when, I ask, did ye last get that vent soopit?"

"Only the ither day, Johnny."

"When, I simply ask?" re-demanded Johnny, vigorously thrusting at the same time several successive handfuls of salt up the chimney.

"Only aboot three years since."

"Is that a', Betty? I was guessing it hadna seen a sweep's brush this century. Bring me a pail o' watter, an' the blankets; the saut's worse than yisless."

"What, my guid Ayrshire blankets! Are ye clean daft, Johnny Macfarlan? I'll bring ye the watter, but no yae inch o' the blankets ye'll get to spread owre thae jambs, no even if it was to save the hale land frae the flames!"

"But I must get them," insisted Johnny, making a dash at the articles named.

"But ye'll no get them, Johnny," as firmly retorted Mrs.

Macfarlan, seizing at them in turn. And thus arose a domestic tug-of-war, as to the possession and disposal of the bed blankets, the issue of which, in view of Mrs. Macfarlan's superior size and weight, could neither be of doubtful nor protracted contest. But the heroic Johnny, if heavily outweighted, was certainly not out-spirited. He was, in point of resolute courage, quite equal to the trying occasion.

"Let go my blankets, Johnny Macfarlan!" cried his large spouse, forgetting in her passion the calamity which was raging in the "lum," and pulling at her end of the disputed blankets most vigorously.

"I'll tear them in twa first!" retorted Johnny, equally oblivious to the progress of the conflagration in the chimney, also pulling with all his strength at his end of the stick —"I'll—I'll—I'll tear them in twa first!"

"Ye'll what, Johnny Macfarlan? O'd I'll tear ye!" And putting the whole weight and strength of her body into the tug, she whipped up Johnny clean off his feet and deposited him with a lightning swish at the opposite side of the kitchen. Johnny held determinedly on by the disputed blankets, however, and was presently swished back again to his former latitude, thus forcibly illustrating the Highland sergeant's military command, "As you wass!"

"If it's a tumblin' circus clown ye mean to mak' o' me, Betty," gasped Johnny, "I'll gie ye some stiff exercise."

"O'd, I'll clown ye!" retorted Mrs. Macfarlan; and swish —Johnny was once more deposited on the opposite side of the kitchen, much in the manner of a fly at the end of a fishing rod which is being actively whipped by an enthusiastic angler.

Suddenly, while the pair still violently wrangled, a rumbling noise was heard in the chimney, as if a bag of gravel was being emptied down the passage, and, the next moment, a pour of soot and water told too truly that some over-active sweep had descried the fire from his dingy

residence "up a back closs" somewhere, and that here was the frightful result—half a hundredweight of soot on the floor, liquidized with a bucket of water, which was quickly followed by a second, and even a third discharge, until poor Mrs. Macfarlan's abused floor was "jist fair soomin'!"

Struck with dismay, Mrs. Macfarlan yelled in perfect horror, while Johnny, equally astounded, let go his hold of the nether end of the blankets and blankly "glowered." The blankets thus released from Johnny's grasp got badly trailed in the soot and wet, which fair put the cope stane on Mrs. Macfarlan's accumulated distress, and she accordingly did everything hysterical except "fent"; and, but for the arrival on the scene of the offending sweep, she would very likely have chosen to conclude the amusing comedy in that legitimate feminine fashion.

"Three shullings, if you please, Mrs.," said the sweep, wiping some highly imaginary drops of sweat from his brow, "an' I'm entitled to it by law, as ye ken weel enouch."

"For what?" replied Mrs. Macfarlan, "for fylin' the hoose? Clear oot o' here as quick's ye like, ye British nigger, if ye pit ony value on a hale skin; clear out, I say!"

"Three shullings for pittin' oot the fire—that's what I require," and the sweep stood largely on his small dignity.

"O'd, I'll three shullings ye, ye confounded vagabond! fylin' my hoose for nae ends nor purpose, an' to croon a', wantin' peyment for the impidence! O'd, I'll three shullings ye!" and flinging aside her blankets she caught up a hearth-broom and energetically pursued the astonished sweep round the apartment, who escaped her vigorous wrath only by seizing Johnny bodily, and so making a protecting buffer of him in warding off the blows dealt by his exasperated spouse.

"I'll summons ye for the money, auld wife," cried back the defeated sweep, as he made a hurried retreat from the place.

"Auld wife!" ca'in' me an auld wife!" yelled Mrs. Macfarlan, "an' me only thirty next Marti'mas!"

"Ye're sixty if ye're a day! and a dour auld Turk intae the bargain," was the sweep's parting shot.

Mrs. Macfarlan made a quick rush at her sooty reviler, but he was gone.

"He's awa' to tak' oot a summons," remarked Johnny, in a tone of voice touched with alarm.

"Let him gang, an' I'll mak' the chiel wha tries to serve it on us dance the Hieland fling on a hot plate! But, eh me! it's my guid Aryshire blankets I'm like to greet owre," continued Mrs. Macfarlan, "they're fair ruined wi' soot an' dirty watter."

"An' what aboot my lost lum hat, Mrs. Macfarlan? The blankets are there in substance, as ye see, but whaur's my hat? I ask, and defeated Echo answers—'Where?'"

"Never mind yer hat, Johnny," said Mrs. Macfarlan, consolingly, "I'll knit ye a grand new worset Tam o' Shanter, wi' a red toorie on't as big as a turkey's egg, an', dressed in that, Johnny, the ekwal o' ye 'ill no be seen doon the watter next week between Gourock an' the Cumbraes."

And so ended the mending o' Johnny Macfarlan's auld lum hat.

THE MINISTER'S MISTAKE.

DAVIE DOONS, and his wife, "Coal Katie," first began the business of selling coals in a very humble way. Davie's back was for long both "cairt an' cuddy" in the carrying out of the customers' coals, but, orders increasing through the business push of his wife, Davie at length managed to purchase a second-hand cuddy for seven-and-sixpence, and making

another purchase of an oblong soap-box from a wholesale grocery store, he got it mounted on a pair of home-made wheels, and henceforth publicly drove about his own conveyance.

He named his newly-purchased cuddy, Katie, after his wife, and the beast's keep cost him little or nothing. In the course of the week an auld straw bass which some housewife had thrown on the street, or anything of a similar sort, would serve the humble animal with a good meal, washed down with a long drink of cold water from the horse-troch. Every morning, too, Davie bought the cuddy a new scone, rubbed her auld nose wi't, and ate it himsel'! while every Sunday, Katie was led out to "grass" on some neighbouring park, getting her stomach corrected by a free feed of nettles, Scotch thistles, and docken leaves.

When the minister looked Davie up—which event usually happened about yince in the twa years—he always excused himself for non-attendance at the kirk by declaring that business was sae bad and the profit on coals so small that he couldn't afford to buy Sunday clothes—unless the minister consented to admit him in his native full-dress suit of coal-gum blacks! In this way Davie dodged along as best he could, and with his pipe in his cheek, a gospel tract in his waistcoat pocket, and a hunderwecht of coals on his back, he thought himself pretty fairly provisioned for both worlds. Things went on in this style, cannily enough, until one day the poor cuddy set down one of her fore feet on a piece of old wood with a five-inch roosty nail sticking through it.

"That's a sair job for baith me and the cuddy," remarked Davie, as he bent down to pull out the nail. The forecast turned out too true.

On the third day the cuddy, it was noticed, limped badly when in the cairt, and by the end of the same week she was a fair cripple, laid up in the stable. Davie was much put

about at the accident. He might have spared his wife for a week, he thought, but not so well the indispensable cuddy. Davie, however, struggled on as best he could, poulticing the cuddy's disabled foot, and carrying out the customers' coals on his ain honest back, when one day he met the minister in the middle of the road.

"Well, David," began the minister, "how are you keeping, and how's all at home?"

"Weel," replied Davie, letting his coal-bag swing down on the ground, "I'm aboot or'nar' mysel', but things are a' wrang at hame—Katie's in the way o' deein', I fear."

"Dear me," said the minister, "I'm truly concerned to hear of this."

"And so am I, sir," replied Davie, scratching his toozie head, "It's a sair mornin' for me when Katie's no fit for her wark, for then, ye see, I've got to cairry the customers' coals aboot on my ain back," and here Davie sympathetically rubbed first one shoulder and then the other.

"Dear me, David, I'm quite astonished to hear you speak thus," said the minister, who very naturally thought that Davie was referring to his wife, instead of the disabled cuddy; "do you really make Katie carry about the customers' coals on her back?"

"Well, no jist exactly on her back," replied Davie, "but she pu's them alang the streets in the cairt."

"David! David!" exclaimed the minister, "thus to abuse your helpmeet and best friend!"

"Ye may weel say that, sir! my helpmeet and best frien', indeed. She's wrocht lang and sair for me, and has cost me but little for food. She's a truly teuch auld yaud o' a beast to pu' in a cairt, an's worth twa pownies ony day."

"David, my dear man, do not, I pray thee, speak of her in that way," said the minister, with averted look.

"It's the candid, even-down truth I'm tellin' ye," replied Davie, "I'm gie'n her nae mair than's her due. She's been

a teuch, willin', workin' auld yaud since the first day I had her"

"Why, my good man," said the minister warmly, "you speak of Katie as if she was some old horse."

"She's worth twa o' ony horse on the road, I'm tellin' ye. Pit her atween the twa trams, and I'll bate my bonnet she pu's alangside o' ony horse or pownie in the coal trade."

"Yes, yes, David," said the minister, "but, pray, tell me, what is the matter with Katie?"

"Weel, we was oot thegither wi' the coals, ye see (the minister nodded), and she set her foot doon on a five-inch roosty nail. The plaguey thing has beel't up to the vera shank bane, and I'm deid fear't she'll crap owre't."

"And I have never heard of this till now, David?" said the minister, reprovingly.

"Oh, ye ken fine she's no a kirk-gaun animal," replied Davie, with a quiet laugh. "She's a teuch auld yaud atween the cairt trams, as I before remarked, but what's her religious value is mair than I could say."

"She has a soul to save, David," said the minister.

"Weel," stammered Davie, "that may be so, but I'm doubtfu' if she's aware o't." And Davie, tickled with the humour of the thought, "clauted" the back of his head, and glanced sideways at the minister with a twist in his face like a ravelled hank of thread.

"Have you had a doctor to see her, David?" next enquired the minister.

"If it's the veterinary surgeon ye mean, he wadna waste tuppence worth o' medicine on siccan an auld wrocht-oot animal as she is, I fear. She can pu' a cairt o' coals when weel, but beyond that she's worth jist naething!"

"She's surely worth praying for, David?" said the minister.

"Weel, sir, if prayin' wad bring her roun', the suner were intae't the better, for my back's fair broke daein' her

wark;" and Davie once more rubbed his shoulders with evident feeling.

"Go home, David," said the minister, "and read a chapter to her, having faith in the result; and I do hope and trust that this sore and trying affliction may be duly blessed to both you and your wife."

Half an hour after, Davie was home and had related his interview with the minister almost word for word as it occurred.

"Ma patience, pray for the cuddy!" exclaimed Davie's better-half on hearing the story, "wha was gie'n ye drink, Davie?"

"Oh, it's a richt," said Davie, "but drunk or sober, I'll baith pray and chapter Katie in the stable this very nicht, for if I'm to cairry oot the customers' coals much langer I'll soon hae a corn on my back as big as Benlomond."

That same night Davie took down the big-print Bible, and telling his spouse to bring matches and a candle, he made straight for the stable door.

"Licht the can'le," he said, getting out his specs and preparing for serious work. "I wad like to wale a chapter wi' a verse or twa suitable to our present affliction, but whaur to fa' on't I'm bate to ken."

"Try the Revelations, Davie," said his wife, "there's wonderfu' passages there."

"Revelations, did ye say?" and turning over the leaves of the Book as it lay spread on his knee, he at length concluded just to take a chapter at random, when, just as he was proceeding to open his mouth with a big—BEHOLD! the disabled cuddy suddenly drew up her hind leg, and letting fly, knocked the specs frae his e'en, the Bible owre his heid, and himself owre the box he sat on.

"Eh!" yelled Davie, on getting to his feet, "did ever ye see siccan rank unbelief! an' after a' the minister's talk, tae! Her a sowl to save! She's a perfect auld heathen!"

"'Deed, I kenn'd weel enough frae the first that 'salts' wad hae sair't her better than Scripter," put in Davie's better-half.

"I'll jist awa' up this instant and let the minister ken the result," was Davie's answer, and, quick on the thought, he at once set off in the direction of the minister's manse.

"Weel, David, my good man," began the minister, "how's Katie haudin' now ?"

"Mair life and spunk in her than I could have believed, and mair infidel unbelief, tae, I'm sorry to confess."

"David ! David !" expostulated the minister.

"Oh, ye may David, David me as lang's ye like ; but when I made to read a chapter to her, the infidel auld yaud kick't the Bible slap owre my heid. There's conduct for ye !"

"Deplorable ! deplorable !" exclaimed the minister, with both hands elevated in mid air. "She must have altogether lost her senses. I'll just put on my hat, and come along and speak to her."

"You'll speak to her, minister ?" questioned Davie, scratching at his toozie heid in fell surprise.

"Yes, David, I'll seriously argue the point with her," replied the minister, turning away to get his hat and stick.

In two minutes Davie had returned to the house, and warned his wife that the minister was coming along to see the cuddy.

"And me in this state," said his wife, "my face and twa hands as black's a sweep's ! I'll jist rin in next door for twa minutes, and ye can tell the minister I'm oot makin' my markets."

A moment after, the minister's solemn step was heard in the lobby.

"Here already, minister ?" said Davie, as the reverend gentleman stepped across the threshold.

"Yes, but where is Katie, your disabled helpmeet ?"

"She's in the stable, and I'll tak ye in to see her the noo. Sit doon a minute."

"In the stable!" exclaimed the astonished minister. "How can you be so unkind as to keep her in the stable?"

"And whaur then would I keep the cuddy if no in the stable? Surely ye widna expect her to stay wi' me an' my wife in the kitchen, even though she has been a guid helpmate?" replied Davie.

"Do you mean to tell me that it is the donkey and not your wife that you have been referring to all this time!" exclaimed the amazed and confounded minister.

"Of coorse! and nae yin else," said honest Davie.

"What! Am I to understand that you call the animal 'Katie,' and that there is nothing the matter with your wife's leg after all?" demanded the minister, in solemn tones.

"Bless my heart, minister, did ye ackwally mistake my wife, Katie, for 'Katie' the cuddy?" laughed aloud Davie, his coal-gum countenance puckered with a thousand merry wrinkles.

A moment after the completely dumfoundered minister had hurriedly fled the spot. The disabled cuddy recovered the use of its foot in due time; but when the minister meets Davie on the road he very conveniently looks up to his native skies and keeps the far-away side of the street.

THE TAILOR MAK'S THE MAN.

Bailie Stout, a Glasgow magistrate of a past generation, had made himself particularly obnoxious to the starving unemployed of the city during the distress which led to the riot of 1848, by refusing to vote them adequate help at the Town Council Board, and a trick was played on him, in that

connection, which eventuated in a highly humorous adventure, and forcibly conferred on the self-conscious Bailie, a brief experience as an amateur convict.

The Bailie had been having his usual social sederunt in a small chop-house in the Trongate, and was returning, late o' night, to his house in the Candleriggs, when he felt himself seized without warning, and forced up a dark entry, at the top of which he was hurriedly disrobed of his sober tweeds and re-clothed in a suit of dirty white moleskin, the identical suit worn by the ring-leader of the rioters on the preceding day.

Thus attired, the outraged Bailie was left to shift for himself, as best he could.

"My goodness!" he muttered to himself, as he hurried off; "to think o' a Gleska magistrate jinkin' aboot the streets o' auld St. Mungo attired in an Irish labourer's cast-aff claes!"

He was making to get across Trongate, a little west of King William's equestrian statue, when a strong voice halloaed him, and called on him to stop. Looking about, the Bailie saw two men hurrying across the Trongate after him, and concluding that a further development of the infernal plot already worked out against him was about to be inaugurated, he thought discretion the better part of valour, and —precipitately fled. The Bailie's run, however, thanks to his moleskins and his bodily beef, was more of a "juck's waddle" than ought else, and in a few moments a pair of rough hands were laid on his shoulders.

"The very man we want," said one of the two detectives. for it was none other than two local detectives. "A lucky find!"

"What want ye wi' me? what's the matter wi' the auld hat noo?" gasped out the astounded Bailie.

"All right, the thing's moleskin in more ways than one. A certain man in a dirty white moleskin suit, led the rioters

this forenoon. This resembles the suit, and — you are undoubtedly the man ! Come along."

"Great Scott ! here's a funny fix," exclaimed the horrified magistrate, "tooken up for a criminal—a rioter ! it's no' possible ! it's no' possible ! Look at me. I'm a toun's magistrate, Bailie Stout o' the auld Can'leriggs."

"Ha, ha, ha !" laughed the officer. "Tell that to the Horse Marines. As for us, we're not quite so jolly green. Come along, you rascally old fraud !"

"The Lord luck to me, but this is most desperate wark !" exclaimed the Bailie, as he was being led off, "but stop a wee ! jist ye stop a wee ! there's six or eicht 'll swing for this job yet, if there's an ounce o' law left in Scotland !"

And thus fuming out his just wrath, the unfortunate Bailie Stout was hurried off, without further explanation or apology, to the Central Police Office as a suspect of the most notorious dye. It looked an unfortunate affair for Bailie Stout. He was now practically in the hands of the police, and, what was even worse, was likely to be thrust into a common cell, with the charge of being a rioter written against his name. The bare thought of such an eventuality was torturing in the extreme. But why bother himself ? The charge was glaringly false all through, and was he not Bailie Stout, a most respectable citizen, and—a magistrate !

And yet, had not men been convicted and hanged on purely circumstantial evidence. They had, in numerous instances, he well knew, and this unfortunate victim of a police mistake shivered with horror at the bare possibility of such a dire catastrophe as a criminal conviction. It was no use the victim's threats and expostulations. The two officers were obdurate, and the prisoner's repeated asservations that he was not the man suspected, but the veritable, tangible, and irrefutable Bailie Stout, of the auld Gleska Can'leriggs, so perseveringly made, were received with shouts of laughter as the stupid fabrications of a culprit neatly

trapped. Within five minutes the officers and their prisoner were standing before the charge bar, in presence of the lieutenant on duty.

"The charge ?" inquired the lieutenant.

"A 'suspect,' believed to be the man in the white moleskin suit, who led the mob in the East End this forenoon," answered the officer.

"It's a mistake!" gasped out the prisoner, "a most desperate, stupid, fearful mistake!"

"Silence, prisoner!" said the lieutenant, in a tone of voice loaded with the weight of authority.

"What! wad ye daur to order me to silence ?—a toon's magistrate!"

The astonished lieutenant, thus taken by the proboscis, so to speak, deliberately put on and adjusted his spectacles, so as to have a proper survey of the prisoner.

"Oh, ye may spectacle me as much as ye like, my fine man, but haud yer haun' a bit ere ye commit me, or by my sang ye'll rue't the langest day o' yer life."

"A fit subject for Gartnavel," remarked the lieutenant.

"Tak' back that insultin' statement, sir, or stan' the consequences. I'm Bailie Stout o' the auld Can'leriggs," slapping the counter with his hand.

"Now, look here, prisoner," said the lieutenant, "if I have to suffer another interruption from you, I'll at once lock you up in one of the cells as a drunk and disorderly incorrigible."

"Try that trick on me, an' its any amount o' nails in yer coffin, my fine chiel," said the prisoner, with rising spirit.

"Silence, will you ?" thundered forth the lieutenant.

"Go you to Cockenzie!" retorted the prisoner.

"What is your name, sir?" asked the lieutenant, changing his tack.

"Bailie Stout," replied the prisoner, "as I've already tell't thir twa fellows fifty times within the last fowr minutes." The

lieutenant burst into a fit of laughter, in which he was heartily seconded by his two official subordinates.

"Oh, ye may lauch," said the prisoner, "but I'll haud ye a saxpence ye'll lauch on the wrang side o' yer mooth before ye're dune wi' this job, my fine fellows."

"Are you going to give me your real name?" once more questioned the lieutenant, "or must I add impersonation to the charge already preferred against you?"

"Bailie Stout o' the auld Can'leriggs, that's my name," once more insisted the prisoner, shooting out his rotund "corporation" with assured self-consciousness.

"Let the turnkey search him," said the lieutenant, abruptly turning away.

"What! anither indignity? Wad ye ripe my vera pooches?" gasped out the prisoner, as the officiating turnkey seized him rather roughly by the arm, and wheeling him right about face began turning out the contents of the rather large and flabby pockets of his ill-fitting moleskin suit. The contents were common enough—a broken clay pipe, a bit of thick tobacco, a red-spotted pocket handkerchief, and—ah!—what is this?—a copy of the four inflammatory resolutions read and passed by the rioters at the mass meeting held on the Green before proceeding to their work of destruction. The keen eye of the lieutenant fixed on the document the moment it was brought to light.

"A most important 'find,'" remarked the lieutenant glancing over the paper, and taking in the sense of the compromising matter with true official instinct and zest. "Looks bad for you, old man.'

"What's this noo?" gravely asked the prisoner, "hae ye fand anither mare's nest, or what?"

"We've found out what will send you across the seas, old man, I fear," answered the lieutenant. "Remove the prisoner; cell 21."

"What! pit me in a polis cell?" sang out the indignant

Bailie. "Mind what ye're aboot, lieutenant; if there's necks to be streetched in connection wi' this affair, my man, yours 'll rin a bad chance o' escape ; it's as fack as my name's Bailie Stout, an' that's gie'n ye a last warnin' word."

The prisoner's last warning word, however, was of no effect whatever. The lieutenant seemed to care no more for it than he did for the spittle he exuded from his mouth at the moment, as if in contempt. And, fuming like a scolding washer-wife, the excited prisoner was led off to the confinement of the cell, protesting with great vigour of lungs that he was the real and tangible Bailie Stout, o' the auld Can'leriggs, and vowing loudly that six or eight of the police officials would swing for the outrage done him, "if there was an ounce o' law left in Scotland." Right law or wrong law, however, poor Bailie Stout was run into cell 21, and the door heavily locked on him.

"My goodness, but this is a fine farce!' thought the Bailie when left to himself; "a Gleska magistrate in a polis cell! It—it—it bates cock-fechtin'! What wad the Provost say if he saw me here, I wonder?"

"He would most likely say, my good friend," said a deep sepulchral voice from an opposite corner of the cell—"he would most likely say and conclude that, like me, you were here to note, observe, and study both sides of the question."

The astonished Bailie jumped about three feet from the ground when the deep bass voice of the speaker broke on his ear, which suggested, in spite of its friendly words, an underground relationship and resurrectional possibilities. The voice that had just spoken, however, indubitably belonged to a man, as Bailie Stout presently discovered, and a man, too, displaying a personality six feet high, and turning the scales, obviously, at fifteen stone. He was, in fact, more than a mere man—he was, presumably, a minister, if a seedy black clerically-cut suit, a round-about stand-up white collar, and a broad, soft, shovel hat are worth founding an inference on.

Advancing towards the astonished Bailie, the clerical-looking stranger frankly extended his hand as a token of good feeling and friendship in a common distress. The Bailie, however, overruled by his native Scotch caution, proffered him only the extreme tip of his forefinger, which the indulgent stranger very warmly caught and as warmly shook, hoping that he saw his "valued friend quite well."

The Bailie withdrew his imprisoned forefinger as soon as he was able, assured his interlocutor that he was full of his usual "weelness," and continued moving cautiously backward as often as the tall, clerical-looking stranger advanced in his direction. He was uncomfortably afraid of the tall stranger, who, in spite of his clerical attire, had an uncanny look.

"Perhaps," thought the Bailie, "he's the resident prison parson let loose on me through some invisible sliding door-panel."

Then he decided on questioning the tall cleric, point-blank, as to his business in the cell.

"Pray, sir, are ye what's ca'd the prison parson?" he bluntly asked.

"No," responded the tall stranger, "only wish I were. Salary good, billet easy, no vestry meetings, no Dorcas societies, no insipid tea-drinkings with idle young ladies of relaxed sentiment, nor twiddle-twaddle talk with amiable old ones. No, friend, I'm not the prison parson—oh, dear, no! Just now, however, I happen to run the job pretty closely—without the salary though, which is equivalent to playing Hamlet without the character of Hamlet—understand?"

"No, I'll be whuppit if I dae," frankly answered the confounded Bailie.

"Ah, let me explain. Well, you see, although not exactly the prison parson, I'm presently an imprisoned parson, and

passably happy at that. You also possess that invaluable mental panacea of contentment, my good friend, let me fondly hope?"

"Na, na!" gruffly answered the Bailie, "I possess nae invaluable mental pancake o' the kind."

"No! Is it possible, and your head so full of strong character, too? Kindly let me read your head, please." And the tall stranger made a step towards the Bailie, who fell back two steps with great promptitude.

"Keep back!" he said with a deprecating wave of the hand, "I dinna want my cocker-nut graipit by you. Are ye a travellin' phrenologist, or what?"

"I'm a minister of the gospel, friend," said the tall stranger in an appropriately grave and solemn tone of voice.

"An' what the crickey are ye daein' here—in a polis office?"

"Getting illustrations of the other side of the question, and gathering graphic matter for original pulpit ministrations."

"Go you to Dumbarton! I ken a thing or twa better than that, I'm thinkin'."

"Oh, it's really so, my good friend," resumed the crazy cleric; "and therefore have you a special care, old man, lest I chuck you into my next Sunday's sermon as a striking pulpit text. I only wish I had your name entered in my note-book (tapping a side pocket), but I'll get it, I daresay, from my Christian friend, the lieutenant at the bar as I pass out. You look in need of a word in season. I can fix you up there slick, I can. I usually carry a small bottle of spiritual consolation in my pocket as a mental pick-me-up in moments of distress, but the officious turnkey unfortunately relieved me of it at the bar only half an hour ago. Never mind, old boy, I'm square for you in another way. You seem a strong case for Scriptural quotation. You are,

I opine, nothing short of a five-mile-an-hour tramper on the broad road to perdition, eh?"

The confounded Bailie "gapit wide, but naething spak'," to use a handy bit of phraseology. He was sort of half amused and wholly flabbergasted.

"Kindly allow me to decipher your head, friend. Do! rare chance—gratis!"

"Keep back! keep back!" replied the Bailie with a shivery feeling. "If ye offer to lay han's on my heid I'll knock hymn-books an' family Bibles oot o' ye, big as ye are!"

"Just as I thought. Pugilistic propensities strong, reverential feelings weak," and this said, the disordered parson once more stepped close up to the retreating Bailie.

"Sit doun, man! for ony sake, sit doun an' be at rest! I canna bear to see ye stottin' aboot the place like an unlaid ghost."

"Sit down where, friend?" asked the crazy parson, looking pathetically around the empty cell.

"On yer shovel-hat, if ye like. It's a saft enough lookin' handfu'."

"Further confirmation of my first guess. Reverential feelings notably weak. Want to be preached at a bit. I'll take a memorial note of the sad fact, friend. Interesting case to me, I do assure you. You'll go slap into my next week's sermon, as sure as fate—dirty moleskins and all!" And, pop, out came a small metallic note-book, into which the miraculous parson proceeded to make an apparently copious entry, descriptive of the imprisoned Bailie. This effected, he next asked, by way of a climax, obviously—

"By the bye, friend, what's your crime? I'm particular about that, to a degree. You're an Irish labourer, I see from your attire. Probably stolen the hod, eh?"

"I'm Bailie Stout o' the auld Can'leriggs, an' I want nae mair o' yer looney jargon, keep mind o' that!"

"Rev. Josiah Balderdash," said the turnkey at this moment, putting his head inside the door of the cell.

"That's me!" promptly answered the demented cleric.

"Your fine's paid. Come along, and see to it that you cultivate milder spiritual tastes next time you go on the merry 'squeal.'"

"Farewell, my good friend. Look out for yourself in my next sermon."

"Ma feth! if ever ye come up afore me at the Polis Coort, my fine man, it'll be sixty days in Duke Street for you, an' naething less, minister or no minister!" the wroth Bailie hotly cried after the departing parson.

Bailie Stout was liberated from custody that night only on the sworn testimony of two brother magistrates, and any amount of personal friends. Such is the confusing power of a wrong suit of clothes; and so true is it that the tailor makes the man.

And so ended Bailie Stout's prison adventure as an amateur convict.

JOCK TURNIP'S MITHER-IN-LAW.

JOCK TURNIP got married to Jenny Sybo yae nicht very suddenly, after an eventfu' coortship o' seven years' duration. The event having cam' aff suddenly at the last, Jenny urged Jock to consent to lodge wi' her auld widowed mither, till such times as they had gathered twa-three hoose-things thegither. On hearing the proposal, Jock laughingly said—

"Weel, Jenny, my dear, my name's Turnip, an' your mither's name's Sybo: neeps an' sybos usually mak' no' a bad blend; sae, I think we'll e'en gang an' lodge wi' yer sonsie auld mither, Jenny, dear."

It was a' richt the first nicht o' the marriage. Mrs. Sybo was in gran' tune—the dram being guid, an' her—weel—no' juist teetotal, ye ken. Everything gaed on first-rate, an' like rale clock-work, an' Jock thocht he had got married intae a fine, warm, cosy nest. An' it very sune proved a warm eneugh nest, nae doot, but—Jock shook his heid ower the rest o't.

Weel, the very next mornin', Jock fand oot, to his cost, that he had married his mither-in-law, as weel's her dochter, an' that the courageous mither-in-law had already put on the domestic breeks, an' was very evidently intendin' to regularly wear them. The dawn was juist beginnin' to blink thro' the window shutters, an' the half-past five o'clock bells were scarce dune ringin', when the awfu' voice o' Jock's mither-in-law was heard ootside the room-door, cryin'—

"Get up, Jock Turnip, if ye're a man at a', an' mean to begin life weel! Get up, an' dinna lie there, sotterin' in yer bed till a' hours o' the mornin." Jock roused oot o' deep sleep, rubb't his twa bleer't e'en wi' his faulded knuckles, an' turned his gaze for a moment on his newly-made an' lovely better-hauf, wha was lyin' alangside o' him, six miles deep in a soun' sleep at the moment.

"Jenny! (no response) Jenny!! (no movement) Jenny!!!" (gi'en her a heavy dunch wi' his bent elbow)—

"Um?" grunted Jenny.

"Yer mither's wantin' ye."

"Naething o' the kind," said the mither-in-law, "let the puir, wearit lassie lie still. It's you I want up. Get up, an' get oot to yer wark this minute, or I'll very sune open yer twa steekit e'elids wi' the clash o' a wat dishclout! D'ye hear me speakin'? get up at yince, Jock Turnip!" and Mrs. Sybo began drumming pertinaciously on the door panels.

"I was married only last nicht!" expostulated Jock.

"A' the mair need ye should get up an' hurry oot to yer wark this mornin', ye lazy, guid-for-naething sumph!"

There was no escape from this kind of annoyance; but so long as Mrs. Sybo was kept outside the snibbed door there was at least safety from personal harm. So Jock, who had a certain rude sense of humour, got up and deliberately locked the bed-room door from the inside.

"An' noo, Mrs. Sybo," he cried through the shut door to her, "I'm gaun back to bed for twa hours' rest, an' I'm thinkin' ye'd better be daein' the same."

"Gang back to my bed!" yelled Jock's defeated mither-in-law: "gang back to my bed, an' a lazy, yisless, guid-for-naething son-in-law sleepin' awa' his seven senses on the first mornin' o' his married life—the thochtless, extravagant scoondrel!"

So far, Jock had clearly defeated his domineering mother-in-law. She had made the first move on the newly-arranged domestic draught-board, and he had rather smartly check-mated her play. Thus far, the best of the game was his. But Mrs. Sybo, although checkmated, was by no means defeated. She was a woman, and being a mother-in-law, she was a woman of very considerable resource. So she began to noisily heave about the kitchen furniture, ostensibly by way of showing her indolent son-in-law a brisk example of domestic energy, but in reality with the intention of tormenting him into a prompt compliance with her demand.

"Faith!" thought Jock, "I may lie in bed till doomsday, if I like; but, my wordie, I'll no' be allooed to sleep yae blessed wink mair, I see—lie or rise!"

Bang! (raddle—addle—daddle!)

"Ow, what a smash! that's the three-legg't stule she's flinging about; I'm vex't for the neebors below!"

Crash! (jangle—angle—dangle!)

"There goes the fender!"

Breenge! (pirr—irr—irr!)

"O'd, that's surely the tangs swishin' across the flair!"

Dump! (dirrump—irrump—irrump!)

"Great sticks! that's the auld watter-stowp noo! the table 'll gang next!"

At this juncture, however, Jock's lovely better-hauf suddenly jumpt up, an' look't wildly roun', wauken't oot o' her six-miles-deep sleep by the crashing noises in the but-an'-ben kitchen.

"Eh, Jock, dear, what's gaen wrang at a'? is this the last day, the jidgment mornin', or what?"

"'Deed, Jenny, lass, an' I'm jist thinking it's either the crack o' doom, or some terrible earthquake that's takin' place."

"Oh, mercy me! an' whaur's my puir mither?"

"She's busy superintendin' the removal o' the kitchen furniture."

"What! Jock; are we flittin' then?"

"It seems sae!"

"An' whaur are we flittin' to ava'?"

"Weel, Jenny, last nicht when I got married to you I thocht I was flittin' to bliss, but on waukenin' this mornin' I find I've tooken a trip to perdition; an' the only thing that vexes me is the want o' a return ticket back hame again."

"Eh, Jock, that's a sair word for a man to gi'e a new-married wife," said Jock's better-hauf, reproachfully.

"It's no you, my dear; it's yer lovely mither that's the sair bit. She's a fine, big, roun'-shape't, sonsie-lookin' woman, but her tongue's been dippit in vitriol; an' if yer late respected faither dee'd abroad I wadna blame him for't."

Weel, to resume, Jock attacked his bowl o' porridge in dour silence that mornin', an' gaed oot to his wark wi' his mind in a kind o' mixed state.

"Hallo, Jock," said a bench-mate; "greetings t'ye, noo that ye're a married man; an' what think ye o' the wife?"

"Wh—wh—which o' them?" asked Jock.

"Which o' them d'ye ask! o'd, are ye a Mormon, Jock? ha'e ye married twa?"

"Seems sae," answered Jock. "I've married the wife, an' alang wi' her, her tart auld mither intae the bargain; an', let me tell you, the pair o' them's likely to mak' a fou' handfu'."

"There's mair than you in that same box, Jock; but listen; if ye've ony notion o' character, a mither-in-law's a gran' study for ye."

"Study, be hang't! no, no; I've nae notion o' studyin' her character onyway; I want shot o' her; can ye advise me, mate?"

"Ay, can I, Jock."

"What then?"

"Shift yer lodgin's, Jock; it's the only effectual cure."

"Ye've said it, man; ye've juist said it. I'll e'en shift my quarters this verra nicht; mony thanks to ye for the kind hint."

Weel, that same nicht, Jock, before gaun hame, secured a room for himself an' his better-half, Jenny, an' gettin' a han'-barrow, an' alang wi' that the help o' twa strong men, he hurried awa' owre to his awfu' mither-in-law's, to remove his wife's "kist an' beddin'," alang wi' her share o' the hoose furniture, which simple Jock had been a' alang led to believe was most valuable, and very extensive.

Arrived at the door, Jock sent up the biggest o' the twa men he had brocht alang, wi' a message for Jenny to come doon at yince, an' to bring her kist an' her beddin' alang wi' her.

"Is Jock Turnip wi' ye?" was Mrs. Sybo's first pointed question.

"He's waitin' at the stair-fit," was the answer.

"Send the rascal up here this instant; I want to see him very particularly."

Down goes Jock's assistant with the curt message.

"Weel, hoo does the moral barometer stan'?" was Jock's first question, "stormy lookin', I suppose?"

"Ye're wanted up stairs, Jock, by yer amiable mither-in-law, very particularly."

Jock touched the one side of his nose with the tip of his fore finger; and winked suggestively with the opposite eye.

"What, are ye no gaun up?" asked his cronie.

"No this time," answered Jock.

"What, frichtit, Jock?"

"No exactly that," answered Jock, "but, ye see, my life's no insured, an' if I was to venture on an interview wi' my most amiable mither-in-law at this interesting juncture, it's mair than probable ye'd get me to hurl hame on that barrow, instead o' my wife's portion o' the hoose furniture, d'ye see?"

Yes, they both clearly saw it, and had not long to wait a final solution of the dilema.

In less than twa minutes doon comes Jenny wi' her share o' the hoose furniture in her airms, in the shape o' a hymn-book, a cup an' flett, a pair o' fitless stockings, a disconnected "dress-improver," an' a broken umbrella of great size, but of quite indefinite age. An' hard after her cam' also doun Mrs. Sybo, Jock's awfu' mither-in-law, wi' fire in her twa black e'en, an' an auld broom-handle fiercely grasped in her han'—

"Ye wad steal awa' my dochter, ye heartless fellow, an' syne ha'e the impidence to come back wi' a barrow for my hoose furniture, ye unconscionable rascal! O'd, I'll furniture ye!" and swinging aloft the formidable broom-handle, Jock's valiant mither-in-law made a sweeping charge at the whole group—the empty barrow included.

"The situation's dangerous," cried Jock, "lift men, an' rin for yer lives!" an' afore twa ticks, the spot was clean vacated, an' Jock's drum-major o' a mither-in-law was left in free possession o' Jenny's imaginary kist—alang wi the

equally-imaginary stores o' beddin' an' general kitchen furniture foolishly supposed to belang to her.

Jock, however, keeps a firm haud o' his new lodgings, and thinks the bargain a perfect blessin', noo that he has secured undisputed possession o' his wife, Jenny, and got happily rid o' his awfu' terjer o' a mither-in-law.

LODGINGS AT ARRAN.

Tammy Lawbrod, a tailor chappie, an' I gaed doon to Arran last Fair Setterday to spend a week's holidays. We had a picturesque week o't, an' no mistake! We had often heard the Island o' Arran spoken aboot as a grand place for pickin' up health. The air was sae wonderfu' fresh there, an' the saut water sae strong, that the folks said ye cood thrive finely there, an' even grow fat on plain tatties and herrin', mornin', noon, an' nicht, wash't doon wi' a jugfu' o' soor mulk. Oor livin' at Arran was, therefore, likely to prove very cheap. But, if the livin' was likely to prove cheap, the lodgin's turned oot a saut enough concern, I can tell ye!

Lodgin's at Arran! D'ye ken what that means? It means oftener than no' twa pounds a week for a hen hoose, wi' six or eicht in the bed, a coo's byre next door, an' the rain comin' thro' the roof! Talk aboot gaun abroad to see the picturesque in life! Gang doon to Arran at the Gleska Fair-holiday time, an' ye'll never need to gang farrer to see mair. Weel, we hadna jist exactly six in oor bed—Tammy Lawbrod an' I; but oor room was quite remarkable for the want o' room. To begin wi', the wee microscopic bed we slept in had obviously been made for the accommodation o' some Italian organ-grinder's monkey in bad health. It was sae sma' that Tammy an' I had, yin micht almost say, to examine it wi' oor specks on! It was a fine tak'-in, that

same furnished room. We saw it advertised in the Gleska papers as a

FURNISHED ROOM TO LET AT ARRAN,

Suitable for two bachelor gentlemen; fine sea-view;. garden at the back; every convenience; own key; terms moderate! Address—Mrs. M'Tavish, Brodick.

The advertisement, ye'll notice, was very nicely worded, an' was fitted to draw like a mustard poultice. It drew Tammy Lawbrod an' mysel' a' the way doon to Arran jist like that! (snapping his finger and thumb). We wrote doon for it at yince, an' engaged it for eicht days, without seein' it; the advertisement, alang wi' Mrs. M'Tavish, was sae fu' o' promise. Talk aboot buyin' a pig in a pock! It was waur than even that, it was aboot as bad as a man tryin' to read the papers wi' the specks on the back o' his heid! Brodick's no' a big place; but we had, nevertheless, some difficulty in findin' oot Mrs. M'Tavish.

"D'ye ken whaur Mrs. M'Tavish bides?" I speired at a native, a wild-lookin' man wi' red hair, tartan troosers, and a squint e'e.

"Faur daes she leeve?" replied the Celt, "tell me faur she stays?"

"That's what I'm wantin' to ken, man," said I.

"So wass me," answered the Celt, with a wild grin.

"Can ye no' tell me whaur Mrs. M'Tavish bides?" I yince mair asked him.

"Wass you come a' ta way doon from Klasko to see Mrs. M'Tavish?" inquisitively replied the Celt.

"Tuts, man, d'ye no' ken whaur Mrs. M'Tavish bides, I'm speirin' ye—yes or no'?"

"Mrs. M'Tavish! Mrs. M'Tavish!" ruminated the Celt, "fat Mrs. M'Tavish wass she bee wantin'?"

"Mrs. M'Tavish wha let's the summer lodgin's," I answered.

"Hump!" replied the Celt with a shrug, "efery Mrs.

M'Tavish, an' Mrs. Macfarlanes, an' Mrs. Macdougalls, an' efery other housewife on ta island keeps twa or four lodgers whateffer, an' twice as more too."

Brodick's no a big place, however, as ye a' ken, an' I fand oot oor identical landlady before lang. She was standin' in' the doorway lookin' oot for oor comin'. We had passed her, back an' forrit, half-a-dizzen times before we ever even suspected that she was Mrs. M'Tavish, or that the hut she occupied was the "Cottage at Arran" we had seen described in that highly romantic and drawing advertisement.

The "cottage" was a yae-story concern, and looked a sort o' twa-hunder-year-auld shepherd's hut or dowg-hoose, tooken doon, holus bolus, frae the hillside somewhaur, an' set on the edge o' the road as a protest against all modern ideas of ordinary taste and comfort. The "garden" at the back was a genuine cabbage yin! Mrs. M'Tavish was a pure native o' the island. She snuffed, wore mutches an' specks, an' spoke a limited quantity of English, interfused wi' an unlimited quantity o' unpronounceable Gaelic.

Beyond an' above a' that, Mrs. M'Tavish was a very thrifty, economical woman. Her hoose consisted o' a but-an'-a-ben, or, to phrase the thing more genteelly, a room an' a kitchen. She kept a coo, and a lot o' cocks an' hens in the hoose, forbye her lodgers. The hens had the best o't. They had, at a' hours, an' on a' occasions, the unqualified run o' the hoose, an' between their ceaseless cackle, the cocks' fearfu' crawin', an' the fine, fresh smell o' the auld coo, tethered at the faur-awa en' o' the kitchen bed, the place, mornin', noon', an' nicht, was remarkably fu' o' the very strongest country odours and associations.

Talk aboot the picturesque in foreign travel! For a genuine e'e-opener, try Arran. Mrs. M'Tavish's yae-room-an'-kitchen concern in Arran was a whussler, I can tell ye! It was the most musical, as weel as the most diversified, lodgin's I ever stayed in. As early as fowr in the mornin',

it was cockie-leerie-law! in yer sleepin' lugs frae the tane or the tither o' the twa cocks; a' the forenoon it was moo-oo! frae the auld coo in the kitchen; while mornin', noon, and nicht, it was naething but clack, clack, clack! frae the twa-and-twenty hens that roosted singly or in pairs in a' parts o' the hoose.

But we had a waur experience than a' that—Tammy Lawbrod an' I. The hoose was a fine airy yin, the roof was thatched wi' straw, an' had numerous keek-holes in't, thro' which the daylicht peeped like wee stars. This was a' very fine sae lang as the weather kept dry. But a break in the barometer took place yae nicht suddenly, aboot fowr in the mornin', an' the scene was changed, as the poet says. That mornin' I was waukened oot o' a deep sleep wi' Tammy Lawbrod dunchin' me on the shoother wi' his elbow. I started, an' looked aboot me.

"What's the maitter, Tammy?" I asked.

"The maitter! d'ye no' see what's up?" he asked, "why, it's poorin' o' rain in here, an' I'm jist thinkin' it wad be better for us baith to get up an' gang ootside till it tak's aff! This is fine, lively, picturesque lodgin's we've cam' to, an' no' mistake!"

"Dook yer heid under the blankets till the rain's aff," quo' I, wi' a laugh, for I coodna help laughin' at the oddity o' the situation, badly as we were in for't.

"Nae yise," replied Tammy, "the blankets 'ill be wat thro' in twa ticks; the rain's already lyin' in wee pools on the tap o' them! It's an umbrella we're sairly needin', I'm thinkin'."

"The very thing!" I joyfully exclaimed, an' afore ye cou'd say Jake Robinson, I had jumpit oot the bed, seized my auld umbrella, an' getting yince mair laid doon in bed, flapp't it up abune oor twa heids, to save oorsel's frae the rain that was skytin' doon on us frae the dreepin' roof!

An' for twa lang hours we lay in the bed there, wi' oor

nichtcaps drawn doon owre oor twa lugs, an' the umbrella spread owre oor heids, a grand specimen o' the picturesque in life—and lodgin's in Arran! I kenna how auld Mrs. M'Tavish got on in the kitchen that rainy nicht; but I ken that some o' the cocks an' hens had to hide for shelter ere mornin' below the chairs an' tables!

Folks ha'e different ideas o' hoo to spend a holiday; but I'll say this much, if ye want a new experience in life spend a week in Arran. But for ony sake dinna gang there withoot takin' wi' ye an ample supply o' waterproof, alang wi' a fine big bed-room UMBRELLA!

OOR JOHN'S PATENT ALARUM.

OOR John's a rale genius in his way, he's aye after some droll invention or ither, an' there's nae end to his ingenuity.

Yae mornin' aboot a fortnicht back since he "sleepit in," an' quo' he, "Tib, that's twice I've sleepit in since the New-Year, but I'll sleep in nae mair. I've got an idea, an' I'll set to an' develop it at yince."

Sae doun went John's elbows on the breakfast table, an' clap gaed his heid between his twa han's; an' "I've got it Tib," said he, after five-and-twenty minutes' close thocht, "I've got it—a new idea o' a compound alarum bell, an' I'll hae it ringin' like a kirk-steeple bell this nicht week."

John's a born genius, there's nae twa ways aboot that. His plan was this:—The clock, ye maun ken, was yin o' thir auld niddlety-noddlety sort that wag industriously across the yellow-ochred wa's. John, ye see, designed a wee wheelological instrument o' the curiousest kind, wi' ever sae mony engineerical turlie-whurlies aboot it. The inside works were as fu' o' brains and mechanical unnerstandin' as John's

gifted heid could pang them; an' this was the programme o' heidy contrivances an' sleep-breakin' noises expected to be set agoing at half-past five o'clock on the following mornin':—

The wag-at-the-wa' would be set half an hour forrit, an' in chappin' six o'clock the descendin' wecht would licht upon the trikker o' John's compleecated machine, the ball o' which would begin to descend and the hammer to reverberate jist as the clock bell ran oot. On the road doun, an' while busy alarming John, the wecht would first flap doon the bunker-lid, cowp a lot o' balanced stools, an' then screw on the gas-licht full. John's coffee-can would be hung conveniently owre the gas-burner, an' while the guidman was findin' his way inside his breeks, the gas would be nicely warmin' the coffee. So much for John's patent alarum.

"Tib," said the guidman to me yae nicht, just as the eerie chap o' ten was ringin' thro' the toun, "the patent alarum is noo loaded, an' we may baith gang to bed an' sleep as soun' as the birds in the woods. That new patent alarum o' mine would wauken the vera deid!"

Sae aff to rest we baith gaed, John an' I, an' presently fell soun' asleep, jist like twa spinnin' peeries. I sleepit soun' an' sweet—I'm positive o' that. But jist as the dawn began to grey the sky I maun hae fa'en to the dreamin'. I had been readin' a nicht or twa before aboot the Fa's o' Niagara. I thocht I was there. I was walking under them. The roar that was in my ears was perfectly deafenin'. I started, screamed, an' wauken'd clean up in a nervous fricht. Sittin' bolt upricht, I rubbed my e'en, stuffed my fingers into my ears, an' considered for a moment the exact situation. Yes, yes; John's alarum was comin' thunderin' doun, an' the hoose was as fu' o' sound as the thrangest boat-yaird on the Clyde. I would rouse up John, I thocht. But no; I would sit still an' watch the effeck o' John's invention—on himsel'.

An' there he lay, kickin' an' flingin' an' groanin' an' moanin', under the awfu' noise o' the descendin' alarum, like a man fair demented. In a moment the descendin' wecht bleez'd up the gas, an' struck doon the bunker lid, an'—ow! —what a smash! John, puir man, breeng't aff the braid o' his back clean roun' on to the flett o' his stammack. The next moment doun bang'd the front flap o' the bunker, an' John, puir man, precipitately fulfilled the Highland sergeant's command—"As you was!" Anither moment, an' the wean's chair was flang thump, dump doun; then smash gaed a big stool, an' a second after, breenge went a pair o' big bread servers.

At this extreme juncture, John, clean bye-himsel', jump't bolt upricht, and steadied himsel' on his beam-end on the tap o' the blankets. His e'en were burnin' like twa Hallow-e'en lichts, an' the hairs o' his heid were standin' strecht oot, like a bunch o' daurnin' needles in a sawdust preen-cushion. The cat, puir thing, had been fleein' frantically but-an'-ben the hoose a' the time; an' to croun a', oor wee Skye terrier dowg, hauf demented wi' fricht, set up a series o' the most dismal, melancholy, an' heart-breakin' yowls.

John sat in bed, stock-still, an' silently listened to it a'. Triumph was workin' in every line o' his face. The alarum was a tremendous success! Yae wild spring, an' he was oot on the centre o' the fluir, snappin' his fingers, whistlin' "Tullochgorum," an' hoochin' an' leapin' like a dementit Highlandman, his sleepin' shirt daein' duty for a short kilt. Meantime, hauf-a-dizzen nervous sleepers had their peacefu' dreams shattered that mornin' by a succession o' patent thunder-claps.

A nicht policeman, too, who had been shelterin' himsel' frae the rain at the stairfit, succeeded in makin' things doubly worse by fiercely springin' his rattle, under a settled conviction that the haill building was fa'in' in,—was gaun, in fack, to general pigs an' whussels!

John, perfeckly undisturbed by the terrible consequences o' his patent ideas, drew on his breeks, an' mutterin' something aboot his "star being in the ascendant," sat doun an' steadied his nerves wi' a moothfu' o' warm coffee.

The neibors roun' aboot, however, took events less quately. Windows gaed fleein' up, heids bobbed out, an' doors were flung open on every stairhead. In three minutes, or less, the staircase, frae tap flett to bottom landing, was crooded wi' terrified an' exasperated auld wives, picturesquely attired in red flannen petticoats, white short gowns, an' close-tied starchless mutches, an' everybody was asking every ither body what was the maitter—wha's gas meter had burst? But naebody succeeded in turning the gas on the dark mystery.

A Dutch sailor—Von Tromp by name—wha lived in the tap sky-licht when at hame, presently cam' tearin' doun the stairs, three staps at a time, his heavy sea-boots thrust hurriedly on, his sou'-wester crushed low doun on his broo, an' his muckle reefin' jacket flung loosely across his airm. On the road doun he cowp't successively three separate auld wives wha were industriously pechin' their way up the stairs in search o' explanations.

"Von Tromp! Von Tromp!! Von Tromp!!!" screamed everybody in startling chorus, "what ava's the maitter?"

"Breakers somewhere on de wedder bow; round helm, spread sail, an' coot stick before de wind," shouted the Dutch sailor, never stopping to look once behind him, but crushing wildly on "before de wind," an' running down, in his hot hurry, the excited policeman who had sprung his rattle at the stairfit three minutes before, an' who was now hurrying up to learn wha's roof had fa'n in.

Recovering his feet wi' astonishing speed, the bumbased official turned on his lamp, blew his whussel like a locomotive, an' sprung afresh his noisy rattle, winding up

business by staring the haill stairhead full in the face, an' asking in a bewildered an' general sort o' way—

"Wad some o' the folks no opleege her by makin' a 'shairge'?"

"A chairge!" cried half-a-dizzen voices, "whit richt hae ye to spring yer rattle on the sleepin' lan'? wha sent for you? what richt, in fack, hae ye here ava'?"

"Have I no as more richt here nor you?" demanded the angry official, wi' a self-reliant cock o' the heid.

"Fling that bunch o' dried heather doun the stair," roared Rab Rough, the blacksmith. And the "bunch o' dried heather" fell promptly back in view of bringing up a required support.

But what aboot oor John a' this time? Weel, ye ken, I was busy listenin' at the key-hole to a' that had transpired on the stairheid; an' when the panic was fairly owre, an' the policeman had been shoosted wide o' the neighbourhood for his vera life, I staps in atowre to John, an'—

"Guidman," quo' I, "that's a dreidfu' wark ye've dune, the haill lan', frae tap to fit, is in a nervous commotion."

"It's glorious! Tib; clean glorious!! A greater success than this hisna been kenn'd since the days o' Galileo. Never mind the commotion amang the neebors. There's aye a bit stoorie rumpus amang ordinary folks when men o' great original genius like me shake society wi' their ideas. Sit ye doun, Tib, sit ye doun. Oor fortune's made at last. There's no a workin' man, between Ben Nevis an' Camlachie, but'll gang in for yin o' my patent alarums when yince the tremendous virtue o' them's kenn'd. Yin o' them, richtly handled, wad wauken a haill regiment o' sodgers, let alane a single sleeper. Sit doun, Tib! sit doun, an' tak' a moothfu' o' this coffee. It's perfeckly delicious, Tib. Twa-three sips o't 'ill mak' yer goupin' nerves as quate's a kirk moose."

"But, O John," quo' I, "ye'll hear mair o' this or I'm gey fawr cheatit," gi'en my heid a solemn shake.

"A monument as heich's the tap brick o' Tennant's stalk 'ill be the upshot o't, Tib," said John, clappin' my shoothers consolingly, till my vera heart louped intae my mooth.

Noo, John didna stir a fit to his wark a' that eventfu' mornin'; sae, as we sat thegither at the breakfast table—"John," I began, wi' a bit coaxin' lauch, "if the result o' your grand new patent alarum is the keepin' ye oot o' yer wark of a mornin', it can hardly be said to be fulfillin' the purpose for which it was designed."

"Hoot-toots!" ejaculated John "ye ken naething aboot the sublime exstatics o' genius. Wha could gang to their wark in the face o' sic an overwhelmin' triumph? It pits the clean Peter on Jeems Watt an' the steam engine—thrice owre. Gang to my wark! Tib. It wid be a doun-richt prostitution o' logic an' rationality; naething short o't, Tib—naething short o't;" an' John thereupon began snappin' his fingers an' whusslin' like fury, "ALL AMONG THE CLOVER."

Weel, the vera next nicht, word gaed roun' the lan' that there were nae fewer than seven auld wives lyin' deid-ill o' shaken nerves an' low fever, resultin' frae the fearfu' fricht they had got, an' John, in spite o't a', persisted in his determination to load the alarum full-cock that nicht, an' that, too, wi' several improved additions, intendin', as he declared, to ring up the haill building, an' thereby consolidate an' assure the success o' his new invention.

Weel, I was perfeckly putten by mysel' wi' the bare thocht o't. Sae I gets on my chacket shawl an' my market bonnet, an' awa' I gangs across to my guid-brither—Johnny InkBottle, the lawyer's copying-clerk—an' I tells him what's what, an' what I wantit dune.

Sae, jist to frichten John aff his mad intention, he traces oot a big fearsome-lookin' note o' interdiction against JOHN

Muckle-din, chairgin' the said John Muckle-din wi' a' violent an' unprovoked molestation o' the neighbourhood, to the discomfort an' injury o' the lieges, an' threat'nin' a' sorts o' punishment, if the annoyance was persisted in, in the high name o' the Captain o' the Police, the which dockiment he promised to immediately send owre to John.

Weel, back I gangs, an' five minutes after, an official knock comes to the door, an' a heavily-sealed an' awsome-lookin' dockiment was handed gruffly in.

"John! John!! what's this at a' ava?" cried I, handin' him the legal dockiment, an' lookin' three fourths in a fent, ne'er lettin' on I kent ocht aboot it.

John opened it, cannily, but deliberately, lookin' jist a thochtie blue on the subject, an', "Tib," quo' he, "it's a' letter o' interdiction against my alarum, frae the Lord Provost, nae less, wi' as mony 'Wherefor's' an 'Whereas's' scatter'd through it as wid cowp the wits o' onybody short o' a man wi' a poother'd wig. Weel, if that's no putten the veto on a man o' genius, I'll jump the kirk steeple."

I tried to pacify him by showin' him the reasonableness o' the interdict, but—

"Na, na," quo' John, "it's rale even-doon persecution; naething short o't, Tib. They did the same thing, long ago, to Galileo—a man of genius like mysel'. Ay! Tib; an' this is Great Britain, an' this the boasted 19th century! Lord, I could thraw the neck o' that narrow-souled Captain o' the Police! His mind's no the size o' a George the Third sixpence!"

Weel, to mak' a lang story short, the interdict was rumpled angrily up an' stapped viciously ahint the fire; an' the alarum, wi' a' its patent wechts an' fastenin's, was that same nicht lowsed saucily doun, an', there and then, broken up into flinders, that an ungratefu' warld micht never profit by the idea.

O'd, I never was mair pleased wi' onything in my life

than jist to see John break up his patent machine. An' if ever oor John thinks o' constructin' anither Patent Sleep-Breakin' Alarum, I hope an' trust he'll succeed in makin' yin that'll wauken himsel', withoot exactly rousin' up a haill street.

MRS. MACFARLAN GANGS DOON THE WATTER.

FAIR-MONDAY was at hand, when Mrs. Macfarlan's promised fortnicht at the coast would begin, and it was now expedient that the setting in order of the family wardrobe should be completed without further delay.

Johnny's "lum hat" was irretrievably lost, and a new hat was quite outside of the question. The general purse wouldn't allow of it at all. The most that Mrs. Macfarlan could do, by way of compromising the loss, was to buy a "cut o' worset" an' knit Johnny a braw new Tam o' Shanter according to promise. This she accordingly did, and on the Monday morning following Johnny was able to sport a grand Tam o' Shanter bannet, with a great red "toorie" on the top of it, and showing a general breadth of body which, if it did not exactly cover the whole of Johnny's numerous family, effectively covered at least his own head and shoulders.

"Weel, what think ye o' yer wife's handiwark, Johnny Macfarlan?" asked the author o' the new Tam o' Shanter the moment her husband had clapped it on his head.

"A perfect umbrella, Betty. A man could hide frae a shoo'r o' rain or a tax-gatherer under't. I hope the wind 'ill no flaff't aff my heid gaun doon in the steamer the day."

"Dod, ye maun watch that, Johnny. Yer lum hat was burnt the ither nicht, an' it wad be a heart-breaking affair if yer new Tam o' Shanter was to be droon't."

"Hum! it wad be a trifle waur if I was to be droon't mysel'. Ye see, lass, it's no the bannet, but the heid that's in it. That's a general truth; in my case it's a particular truth," and Johnny tapped his forehead, and smiled.

"In your case, Johnny, it's no the bannet, but the turnip that's in it," quickly retorted Mrs. Macfarlan. "But, dod me, dinna let us waste ony mair time wranglin' owre turnips an' ither vegetables, Johnny, but rather see tae't that the weans an' a'thing are gettin' ready for the road. There, see ye that; it's half-past eicht o'clock already, an' the boat sails at ten! and me hisna on my bannet yet."

"Only yae hale hour an' a half yet!" sarcastically observed Johnny. "I could walk to Dumbarton in that time."

"Oh, ay, fiddle-faddle aboot till we're owre late for the boat! A bonnie like husband ye are! a fine helpmate atweel! See that you dinna try my temper ony faurer this mornin', Johnny Macfarlan, or it'll be the waur for ye."

At this juncture Johnny got out his pipe, and deliberately prepared to fill it, in view of enjoying for five minutes a nerve-soothing smoke, the accidental sight of which put his worthy spouse into a perfect rage.

"Pit doon that lazy pipe this moment, Johnny Macfarlan, an' tie that wean's buits, or we'll never see Rothesay this day," she once more broke in, "an' cut up thir twa loaves into slices for 'pieces' in the boat, an' stuff them intae the portmanty alang wi' the rest o' the things; an' dinna forget to tie up the three big umbrellas in yae bundle—ye can cairry them in yer oxter alang wi' the lave—an' get oot the perambulator; an' dinna forget to pit Saturday's *Weekly Mail* in yer pouch, for I hivna got time to read the stories yet, an' Johnny——"

"Stop! stop! I'll dae a' that, Betty! I'll dae a' that!"

"An' see that ye fix a buit lace to yer Tam o' Shanter, an' tie it through a button-hole, Johnny; an' mair than that——"

"Yes, yes, Betty! the thing's a' richt; but, great Cæsar! gie me time to breathe. Faith, an' the hen'll wear the cock's kame stiffly before I consent to flit to the saut watter again. I wudna gie a twa-hours ramble through the policies o' auld Camlachie, wi' the pipe in my cheek, an' a yellow buttercup in my button-hole, for a' the saut watter atween this an' New York."

"Camlachie here! Camlachie there!" snapped Mrs. Macfarlan, "get you yer parcels under yer airm, an' set aff wi' twa-three o' the weans, or we'll never, I tell ye, be in time to catch the boat."

"Ay, ay," answered Johnny, "come awa', weans. Oh, no the hale o' ye; five or six'll dae," and picking up his parcels, including the three tied-up umbrellas, the basket perambulator, and the baggy portmanty, Johnny set off forthwith, followed in pairs by some half-dozen of his rather numerous family brood.

"It's a fine thing to be married," thought Johnny to himself, as he trudged heavily on, preceded by the weans—Mrs. Macfarlan bringing up a formidable rear, "it's a rale grand enterprising thing to be married."

Following up her husband, Mrs. Macfarlan at length arrived at the Broomielaw, where she found Johnny in a dour "huff," and asked him,—"What's wrang noo?"

"Wrang, be hang't!" retorted Johnny, "that infernal nichtcap ye've knitted me, to my sorrow, I fear, is faur frae being richt, whatever else is wrang! That's a' I've got to say!"

"An' what's the maitter wi' the Tam o' Shanter, if ye please, Mr. John Macfarlan, Esq.? Let me tell you this, ye never

look't brawer in yer born life, than ye dae in that same bannet o' my ain clever knittin'!"

"Wad ye believe this, Mrs. Elizabeth Macfarlan, Esq., when I was coming through St. Enoch Square there, a big loon of a cairter pointed at me wi' his whup, an' said to his neebor, 'D'ye mind yon, Jock: d'ye see Rab Roy in breeks!'"

"An' what o' that, Johnny?" sneered Mrs. Macfarlan

"Ay, an' a wee brat o' a laddie, a grocer's cadjer or something o' that kind, had the abominable impidence to ask me—'Wha stole my toorie?' Waur than a', when I put up my hand to feel for't he lauched like mad!"

"But yer toorie's no' stolen; it's on the tap of yer bannet yet, Johnny."

"Oh, hang you, Betty! Ye've nae perception o' satire ava'; woman, yer cabbage-heided!"

"An' is that a' ye're in the dour dumps for, Johnny Macfarlan?

"Oh, ay, Mrs. Macfarlan, it's a' richt; I've gotten my twa e'en open't this day; I ken something I didna ken when I left the hoose half-an-hour ago!"

"Ay, an' what's that, if you please?"

"I got a full view o' mysel' five minutes ago! A thing I haena gotten for years. Ye don't ca' yon a lookin'-gless ye hae at hame, Betty?—a wee bit three-cornered scrap o' broken gless, about three inches square, tied up in a bit cloot, an' hung frae a nail in the wa'! I was only able to see mysel' in bits at hame this mornin', but, haith, I've gotten a full view o' mysel' now, an' I've seen what the folks were a' glowerin' at me for. Nae wonder the cairter lad joked his neibor aboot Rab Roy in breeks, pointing contemptshously wi' his whup-shaft at me! The vera sicht o' me wad mak' an Englisher flee up a 'closs' to be safe oot o' my sicht, or pap doon on his knees an' pathetically plead for mercy."

"John Macfarlan, is this a' my thanks for sittin' up

to a' hours knittin' a Tam o' Shanter for ye, when I should by richts ha'e been sleepin' in my bed? But what's the meaning o' a' this bitter talk I canna understan'; yer a cruel-hearted man! that's what ye are!"

"Oh, ay, Betty, that's a' vera fine; but I saw mysel' ten minutes since, as I was sayin', and I got a big fricht, I can tell ye!"

"An' pray, whaur did ye see yersel' then?"

"In yin o' the Colosseum windows owre-bye in Jamaica Street," said Johnny, assuming as grave a countenance as the joke would allow of. "An' I can tell ye, that if my Tam o' Shanter measured an inch across the tap it covered nae less than fowr feet!"

"Is this oor boat?" curtly asked Mrs. Macfarlan, not condescending to further parley.

"Ay, Betty, this is oor boat," answered Johnny, moving promptly in the direction of the gangway, and presently they were all aboard—including the three tied-up umbrellas, the baggy portmanty, the "squealin'" basket perambulator, and alang wi' the rest—Johnny Macfarlan and his grand new Tam o' Shanter!

"Hullo, there, Betty, whaur are ye gaun? Woman, that's the cabin end ye're makin' for: this way for the steerage!"

Such was Johnny's salute as he turned about on stepping aboard the steamer and saw his worthy spouse making self-conscious tracks for the cabin. Mrs. Macfarlan, however, nothwithstanding that she perfectly well heard her husband's warning, did not once deign to look round, but kept moving steadily cabinwards, quite like a lady accustomed to that semi-genteel latitude—ahem! Johnny glowered after her a moment like one bewildered. The cabin! what was in the mad woman's head? Stuffing the basket perambulator in among a lot of miscellaneous luggage lying on the bridge-deck, Johnny at once fixed on his auld specks, and with his

three tied-up umbrellas stuck under his arms, went off to recall to reason his extravagant wife.

The cabin was pretty well filled, and Johnny had some little difficulty in picking out from the rest his enterprising spouse. Very soon, however, he found her seated at the extreme end of the cabin—as far distant from the steerage as she could possibly get—with her face to the crowds that lined the quay, and her extensive family circle spread around her in very noticeable display. The picture was very highly interesting, and obviously only wanted the patriarchal-looking figure-head of Johnny himself to worthily complete the homogeneity of the general family photograph.

And that philosophic figure-head was not long awanting, Johnny was there presently with his specks on, and his three tied-up umbrellas tucked under his left arm.

"Mrs. Macfarlan," he began, "are ye in yer seven sober senses?"

"Never was wicer in my life, Johnny," was the sententious reply.

"Are ye aware that this is — the cabin?" his voice lowered to an awe-inspiring whisper.

"Quite aware o' that, Johnny," answered Mrs. Macfarlan.

"An' are ye gaun to sail in the cabin? but no! it's no possible!"

"Sit doon, man; sit doon an' no mak' a public fule o' yersel."

Johnny at once sat doon, and forthwith concluded in his own mind that the family purse was in a fatter condition than he had all along been led to believe, and that Betty was a "fly yin," and could work him when she liked, "just like meal bannocks."

"Weel, Betty," he resumed after a pause, "I wisna anticipating a sail to Rothesay in the 'cabin' when I cam' oot this mornin."

"We're no gaun to Rothesay in the cabin, since yer sae particular, Mr. Macfarlan."

"And what in the name o' common sense are ye daein' here, then? this is the cabin end, woman!"

"Man, ye're awfu' saft i' the heid. Talk aboot yer Tam o' Shanter bringin' ye intae ridicule. Man yer heid's no worthy o't; it's just covering a muckle turnip."

"Confound you for a trick! isn't this the cabin end?" stoutly persisted the worthy husband.

"Man, d'ye no ken yet, often as ye've been doon the Clyde, that they never lift the fares till they've left Dumbarton! Sit doon, Johnny, sit doon; a fine thing it wad be if somebody in the boat here, or amang the folks on the quay there, should see us packed like sheep in the steerage, an' should gang an' tell my twa but-an'-ben neibors, Mrs. Howdie, and Mrs. Draggletails aboot it; but if they hear o' us being seen sittin' in the cabin, fegs, that'll be something for the spitefu' jauds to chowe at their leisure."

"Faith, Betty, ye're a truly managin' woman! there's no a doot o' that! Cabin to Dumbarton an' steerage to Rothesay! There's variety for a workin' man; an' a' for the price o' steerage fare, tae! Diplomacy for ever! hoo——!"

But Johnny's indiscreet hooray was summarily checked by Mrs. Macfarlan dealing him a most vigorous and wind-displacing dunch on the ribs, at the same moment ordering Johnny to "haud his bletherin' tongue," and also to "tak" aff his auld specks, an' no' to sit glowerin' at the folks on the quay, "like some hamesucken weaver that had never been twa mile west o' Camlachie in his life."

"Ay, ay, Betty, lass," was Johnny's free rejoinder; "cabin passage to Dumbarton; I'd put up wi' a lot for that distinction," and putting past his specks he philosophically folded his "twa airms" and sat perfectly still till the starting of the steamer, a homely picture of easy circumstances and reposeful marriage bliss.

At length the hour of ten came round—tardily, as most things waited for do come—and Johnny, his spouse, and their numerous family were presently off on their annual Fair holiday doon-the-watter trip. What need to describe a sail down the world-famous Clyde. Every Glasgowegian is familiar with it, and knows well its every point of historic interest and scenic beauty, from the busy old Broomielaw to the sea-washed Cumbraes. After an eventful voyage of three hours and a half, Mrs. Macfarlan, and her family including Johnny and his Tam o' Shanter, were all safely deposited on the popular quay of Rothesay.

"Weel, there's nae penny to pey at the pier here, an' that's yae blessin' to a man wi' a numerous family," was Johnny's first remark.

"Pit on yer specks, Johnny, an' look oot for a 'FURNISHED ROOM TO LET' ticket; we'll need three beds intae't, ye ken," said Mrs. Macfarlan, when they had passed from the spacious pier to the streets.

Johnny at once adjusted his glasses, and forthwith proceeded to look up and down the streets and lanes with the inquiring scrutiny of a moneyed man about to make an extensive purchase of street property.

"Yonder's the vera thing, Betty," presently exclaimed our hero, directing the points of his three tied-up umbrellas at a microscopic attic fixed near the sky, seeing which, a nervous old gentleman, ensconced at the window directly below the said attic, suddenly shut down his window and disappeared like magic, thinking, doubtless, that Johnny, whom he obviously regarded as some drunken madman, was about to discharge a loaded gun at his head. The three tied-up umbrellas had evidently a formidable look.

"What! awa' up yonder, Johnny? No, no! we didna come doon here a' the road to roost in some Rothesay skylicht like sparrows. We maun get intae a grun'-flat hoose;

no to be spendin' oor precious win' spielin' up nae end o' stairs."

"Here ye are, then," joyfully exclaimed Johnny, "here's the vera thing noo—a room on the grun'-flat. Let's gang in an' see what's what here."

So Johnny went in first to reconnoitre and cannily "spier" terms. In five seconds, however, he was out again, with a merry laugh on his face.

"Twenty-five shillings a week! an', by jing, a man could nae get room to whup a cat in't!"

"Twenty-five shillings a week for yae apairtment!" breathlessly exclaimed Mrs. Macfarlan, "an' hoo mony beds?"

"Oh, lots o' beds, haill five o' them, nae less—twa set-in beds, a fauldin'-doon bed, a 'mak-up' bed on an auld sofa, an a 'shake-doon' bed on the floor. There's a variety o' beds for ye!"

"We'll gie that bargain the go-bye, Johnny, an' look for some place else."

And they did try somewhere else, for the space of two hours, and, at last, fairly out-wearied with the search, they fixed upon a small room, with the use of the kitchen, at one pound per week. Johnny had already seen so much comedy in the offers of "rooms" made him during his two hours' search, that he was able to hear, without swearing, the highly imaginative Highland landlady declare that the kitchen he had just taken was "weel stockit wi' tishes an' knives, an' forks," and that the room was "rale praw furnish." Regarding the cubic space at disposal, when a stout stranger entered the apartment it was filled, when he proceeded to hang up his hat it was crowded, when he sneezed it was confusion, and when he struck an easy attitude with his umbrella it was a dead block all round.

"Faith, Betty," humorously observed Johnny when they had all got squeezed in, "you an' I'll need to see an' no

cast oot while here, for there's scarcely room to fecht here withoot skinning the knuckles."

"Weel, weel, Johnny, we're doon the watter, onyway, that's yae consolation; besides, we need to dae little mair than merely sleep in't ye ken."

"Faith, an' I'm concerned aboot that same. I'm just half feared I'll hae to sleep wi' my legs in the lobby; an' between draughts o' chilly nicht air, an' late lodger's fa'in' owre my legs in the dark, the prospect's no particularly inviting. The situation to me, at least, is prophetic o' the rheumatics. Next 'Fair' we'll try the effect o' guid kintra air, Betty, east awa by Cum'slang or Camlachie, wi' sammon-trout fishin' in the Clyde, diversified wi' picturesque rambles roun' the coal-pits."

"Will ye haud yer provokin' tongue aboot that odious Camlachie! I just hate the mention o't!"

"Hoots, woman, ye're no up to time ava'. Are ye no aware we hae a member o' Parliament for Camlachie? I've a hauf notion to stan' for the district mysel'. Hoo wad this dae—Mr. John Macfarlan, Esq., M.P., Honourable Member for Camlachie?" and Johnny laughed heartily in the chair where he sat.

"Weel, when yince the tea's on the table we'll maybe thole to hear yer jokes, Johnny; but, meantime, I maun gang oot an' get in some groceries. But whaur's that new bannet o' mine? Weel, that's strange I had it on my heid twa minutes since, an' noo it's nowhere to be seen, up nor down!"

"The hoose is not that big, Betty; it shouldna be that faur astray. Look roun' again, it canna be oot the room."

"Well, that is strange," resumed the perplexed Mrs. Macfarlan, dropping mechanically into one of the two available chairs. "It's no hung up on a nail, it's no in either o' the twa beds, neither is it on the table, an' whaur it

really can be I canna even guess," and Mrs. Macfarlan sighed quite audibly.

"Neither can it be on ony o' the twa remaining chairs," added Johnny, "for 'tween you an' me they're baith occupied."

At the word "chairs" a quick suspicion seemed to seize the mind of Mrs. Macfarlan. Directing a sharp glance at Johnny's chair, she noticed, with a shriek of horror, the end of the blue ribbons of her grand new bonnet depending from underneath Johnny's posterior quarters, and flinging up both her hands, she screamed aloud, and knew no more! Johnny rose and looked at the chair whereon he had been sitting, on the seat of which was spread out, as flat's a veritable flounder, Mrs. Macfarlan's splendid new bonnet, fair crushed to stoor!

The situation was truly critical, Mrs. Macfarlan's new bonnet was practically extinguished, and she herself "cowpit owre in a fent!" At once Johnny ran down to the shore for a jugful of "saut watter," with the intent of dashing it in the face of his overcome spouse, concluding, like the rest of the Glasgow folks, the "saut watter" to be a special specific for the cure of almost all diseases. Returning in great haste he was pleased to see Mrs. Macfarlan so far recovered as to be able to sit up in her chair. She had the unfortunate bonnet in her hand, and was all but weeping over its irreparable destruction.

"If it had even had the nine lives o' a cat they wad hae been fairly crushed oot o't," he heard her saying to herself as he abruptly thrust his head inside the door.

"Try a Tam o' Shanter next time, Betty," he exclaimed, breaking in on her pathetic soliloquy; "ye can then row yer bannet, like mine, intae a ba' an' stap it oot o' the road in yer pouch."

"Is that indeed you, ye destructive villain? whaur hae ye been, sir, tell me that this instant?"

"I was awa doon at the great Rothesay apothecary seein' if I could get ye some medicine, Betty, to bring ye back oot o' that fentin' fit ye took twa minutes since."

"What apothecary, Johnny?"

"The 'saut watter' apothecary, Betty; I've a jugfu' o' his medicine here; it costs naething, an' it's said to be worth much. The half o' this wat 'pill' dash't in yin's face micht wauken even a corpse—no to speak o' a leevin' woman, merely in a fent!" And Johnny put down the jug on the table.

"Johnny Macfarlan, did ye actually mean to empty that jugfu' o' dirty shore-watter about my heid and face?"

"Dirty watter?" said Johnny, emphasizing the adjective to the point of a deliberate question.

"Ay, dirty watter!" as emphatically retorted his angry spouse.

"As true as death I did, Betty, dirty or clean!"

"Then I'll treat ye to a taste o' yer ain cure," rejoined Mrs. Macfarlan, and, springing to her feet, she seized the jug with the intention of treating Johnny's face to its contents.

Johnny, however, was too quick for her, and anticipating domestic war, he wedded instant action to lightning resolve, and backing towards the "jee'd" door, he hurriedly exclaimed—

"Ye've gotten 'lodgin's' a' richt, Betty; ye've the big half o' the purse in yer pouch; ye're recovered o' yer fell fent; an' as I'm something in the road I'll at yince clear oot o' this till next Friday; ta-ta!"

"Johnny Macfarlan, come back this minute, if ye've ony respect for the wife o' yer bosum."

"No this time, Betty, no this time; I'm owre old a domestic kittlin' to be tickled wi' a strae. I'm aff to Gleska! I'll see ye on Fair-Friday mornin'; ta-ta!" and wheeling right about our hero made speedy tracks for the steamboat

pier, where he found a fast river clipper on the point of starting for the up run to Glasgow.

"Faith," thought Johnny, "that was a smart retreat—close order, an' trail airms a' the way! Mrs. Macfarlan 'ill be in a cooler skin by next Friday, I hope, when I'll be doon for guid," and making his way to the "neb" of the boat, so as to avoid cabin complications, he sat down to comfortably rest and perspire, deeply thankful in heart that his Tam o' Shanter would cover, for at least four days to come, the whole o' his family when drawn over his homely brows.

"Yes!" added Johnny to himself, by way of a climax, "there's waur misfortunes in this world than the want o' a big wife an' a sma' family, as a lot o' workin' men in Gleska ken this blessed day."

SANDY M'TARTAN'S VOYAGE TO GOVAN.

I GAED abroad last Saturday afternoon, and returned safe hame again the same evening.

"Get oot my storm hat, my prospect gless, an' my dooble-ribbit umbrella," said I to my wife, Kirsty, "for I'm bound for a foreign land!"

"A foreign land!" exclaimed Kirsty, "an' hoo faur's that?"

"A' the way to Govan in the penny steamers—sink or soom!"

Weel, I got a' finely rigg't oot for the voyage, an' Kirsty, richt reason or rang, wad see me awa' at the quay, as there was nae sayin' what micht happen on the voyage oot.

"It wasna the first ship that had left auld Scotia's shore," she said, "an' never returned to tell the tale!"

But the voyage to Govan didna fricht me very much; it

was the smell o' the Clyde that bothered me. I had been farrer abroad than Govan in my day, an' was, in a sense, a sort o' experienced Clyde sailor.

But, speaking aboot the fine strong sea smell o' the Clyde, I ventured the length o' the foreign shores o' Bowling twa years since, an' I got sic a fricht wi' the smell o' the river that I cam' back to Gleska by the Canal, for I'm fair daft for the sea. But danger o' anither kind overtook me there. When hauf way hame the horse-rope suddenly broke, an' we drifted back an' struck the bank. A' was confusion an' despair for twa minutes.

"The horse-rope's gone!" sang oot the captain; "stand by the pumps!"

But I had got enough o't, I thocht, so I jump't in an' waded ashore, and syne walked hame!

But aboot my recent voyage to Govan. It was a Saturday afternoon, as I said, an' there was a big crood o' emigrants waiting for embarkation, like mysel', at Victoria Quay, near the fit o' the auld Stockwell. I got planted weel forrit, near the neb o' the boat, an' after a lot o' preliminary fareweels and haun'-shaking, the ship's whussle was blawn, an' we cast aff in fine style amid a lot of heart-heezin' hurrahs, an' gettin' oor neb turned seawards, we steamed doon the river in grand style, no leavin', as far as my observation went, yae single dry e'e ahint us.

"Write soon," were the last words I heard Kirsty utter, as she stood on the quay wringin' the tears oot o' her pocket-handkerchief.

"I will," says I, "the moment I set my fit on foreign soil, if there's a post-office within fifty miles o' me."

We had a splendid voyage to Jamaica Street Brig, the weather being nice an' moderate a' the way doon, an' the sea quite calm an' smooth. When passing under the Suspension Brig we spoke the Clutha No. 2 on the up run. Oor captain hailed her, an' Captain M'Sporran, her gallant

skipper, reported "all well," but intimated "rough weather below the bridges."

When nearin' the Broomielaw we saw signs o' civilization in the shape o' some auld cabbage leaves floatin' in the watter, alang wi' an empty match-box, an' some orange skins. At this port we took on board some mair emigrants, an' then stood oot to sea yince mair. A wee bit below Jamaica Street we encountered a heavy fog frae the smoke o' an engine crossin' the Caledonian Railway brig, but oor gallant skipper kept on his course, blawin' the fog-signal a' the road like mad. Below the brig the win' began to blaw an' the sea to rise, so that I took the precaution o' tying doon my hat wi' an auld buit lace I had brocht wi' me for that express purpose.

"What's yon?" asked yin o' my fellow-passengers as we emerged frae the heavy fog.

"That's the tower o' the Sailors' Home," said I, applying my prospect gless to the object.

"Eh, man," he answered, "we're faur oot to sea!"

"I've been a bit faurer than this," I answered, "an' said less aboot it."

"Hoo faur?"

"Dumbarton!" I firmly replied, withoot movin' a muscle o' my face.

That settled him! He gied me yae incredulous look, an' hurried awa' abaft as fast's he could.

When crossin' owre to Clyde Street ferry we passed by a tug steamer which flung up some terrible big waves, an' gied us twa-three desperate "shoos." Some o' the women folks were yellin' for mercy, and haudin' on by whatever was nearest them.

Yae auld wife, wi' a basket o' dishes an' a hawker's bundle, cried oot to me—"Oh, sir, save my bundle!"

"In a crisis like this," quo I, haudin' on by my hat," it's every man for himsel'!"

After that wee bit incident I gaed aft the vessel an' peeped doon into the reserved cabin, whaur I saw an auld maid adjustin' her dress-improver, that had got sair knockit ajee in the tussle.

We had four o' a crew, I may tell ye—the skipper, first and second mate, an' a wee "ticket" laddie. The captain I found to be a fine, experienced, weather-beaten seaman. He had been twice wrecked on the Paisley Canal, and had to jump ashore on each occasion for his life. He was a rale A1 at Lloyd's son o' the ocean, an' spoke quite calmly o' an approaching storm which was likely to nozzle us between Stobcross Docks an' Partick. He had every confidence in his ship, hooever, an' the passengers had every confidence in him.

Speaking o' the passengers, oor company was a mixed lot. The feck o' the folk aboard were Gleska men like mysel'; but we had, in addition, twa Paisley buddies, a wheen Irish quay workers, twa-three women wi' dish baskets an' hawkers' bundles, a fond young couple on their marriage jaunt, an' a mechanic, wha had lost an e'e lookin' for wark in Gleska.

Weel, jist ootside o' the Stobcross docks the weather got heavy, an' we had a gale, jist as the captain had prophesied. To mak' things worse, twa river steamers passed us at the same time, an' left us heavin' wildly in the trough o' the sea. Talk aboot gales at sea. It was for five minutes a perfect wee Atlantic. In the worst bit o' the crisis we shipped a heavy sea that wash't awa' a hawker's bundle an' twa watter buckets. After this the maist o' the passengers gaed doon below for shelter, but I stuck by the saloon deck, an' watched, wi' the e'e o' a poet, the wild play o' the watters. At this juncture I saw yin o' the passengers haudin' his heid owre the side, an' tryin' to vomit; his face was the colour o' writin' paper.

"Are ye sick, my man?" quo' I.

"Yes," says he, "I could stan' the smoke o' the funnel but the smell o' the watter's finished me."

Shortly after this the sky darkened doon, an' we lost oor reckonin' a' thegither. I confess that I felt sort o' nervous, when I heard the captain hurriedly summons all hands on deck, including the wee ticket laddie.

"Stand by the fore chains," he cried, "we're three yairds off oor track; look out for Partick Pier!"

"Ay, ay, sir," sang back the look out, "ship on the weather-bow, hard-a-port!"

"Hard-a-port it is," shouted back the captain, an' round to port we swung, jist in time to escape collision wi' a Clyde Trust tug.

I confess I never was gladder in my life than I was to see the familiar form o' Partick Pier loomin' in the distance. As we steamed in I asked yin o' the crew if they often had a storm like this?

"Oh," says he, "this is naething; the kittly bit's to come yet, crossin' owre frae Partick to Govan."

"What!" says I, "an' we're no' thro' the warst o't yet?"

An' wi' that I jumps on the pier, jist as the vessel was backin' oot.

"Hillo! you there!" cried the sailor after me, "this is no' Govan, it's only Partick Pier yet."

"A' richt, my frien," says I, "sea-voyagin' is nae better than its ca'd; I'm gaun back to Gleska by the tramway cars."

An' so I did gang back by the Partick cars, as I wisna willin' to face a side-sea in crossin' owre to Govan. On the road hame I consulted my note-book, an' I found that I had coontit nae less than seventeen different colours o' watter between the Broomielaw an' Partick. There's variety for ye! Talk aboot the different shades o' the briny ocean. Tak' a voyage to Govan in yin o' the Clyde "penny" steamers, an' ye'll get material for a learned essay on the

subject. Besides, the watter's a' rale genuine sea-watter the haill way doon, for there's no a single drap o' fresh watter to be seen frae the yae en' o' the voyage to the ither.

Neither should I omit to mention the balmy breezes we enjoyed a' the way doon, an' which were perfectly suffocating. They stuck to the nostrils like bile't glue. Then we had some delicious whiffs o' the many oderiferous sanitary tributaries that empty themselves intae the Clyde. They're a' alike, highly perfumed, refreshin' streams, an' affect the nostrils like strong snuff.

Mercy, me! what a sunburnt face I had when I got back to my ain bit hoose in the Coocaddens; Kirsty didna ken me!

"What hae ye brocht me frae abroad," says she, the moment I entered her presence; "a grand new bonnet frae Paris, I hope?"

"Tuts, woman, you women folks are aye after bonnets an' sic-like falderals; I've brocht baith you an' mysel' somethin' mair substantial an' lively than that; I've brocht mysel' hame a pund o' sweet tobaccky ——"

"An' me, what?"

"A cocoa nut an' a blue monkey!"

Weel, frien's, I've been abroad in foreign pairts, as ye noo ken; but, I wad advise a' ye wha intend takin' a sea-voyage for the benefit o' yer health in yin o' the Clyde "penny" steamers, to securely plug your noses wi' cotton before startin', or ye're likely to be kept sneezin' a' the road up an' doon, like an' auld horse affected wi' the glanders.

ROBIN RIGG AND THE MINISTER.

Robin Rigg was a West of Scotland ploughman chiel, who was in farm service in Upper Clydesdale. Robin was an

honest, plain-going, unsophisticated man, and, although neither a scholar nor a theologian, he was none the less a consistent doer of his daily duty in an humble but serviceable way. In point of fact, Robin, honest man, never meddled with, nor even consented to listen to, discussed theology, nor church creed and government, excepting, perhaps, on a Saturday night, when the "clachan yill" was in his head. For Robin was a real typical Scotchman, and took to the discussion of theology when "fou" as naturally as a retriever dog takes to the water. But even then Robin Rigg was often badly at sea on this subject, and was in the habit of roundly declaring that "kirk theology was for a' the worl' jist like a bit o' teuch girsle—wersh in the mouth, an' unco ill to chowe."

Anyhow, Robin, honest man, never made much real progress in the knowledge of things spiritual, as exemplified in the text of the Shorter Catechism and the written law of Moses. He hated technical points and confusing details, but went in heartily for facts as being something that he could get "a guid haud o', an' see clearly wi' his ain twa e'en." For instance, he could admire the rig-an'-fur of a new-ploughed field, he knew the points of a horse or a bullock, he could tell how many handles a plough had, and was a pretty safe authority on the weather, but he was not at all up in the text of the Ten Commandments, nor in the obligations attached to church membership. The tone of his mind, in fact, was the reverse of evangelical, and on Sundays, when he gaed to the kirk, he sat in his pew and simply "tholed" the sermon as he would have done a dull toothache—with this difference, that while the toothache kept him painfully awake, the sermon commonly sent him asleep, for which reason Robin cannily thought the minister's sermon much the easier to "thole."

But Robin was now a full twelvemonth married, and a certain interesting event, not by any means unusual in the

circumstances, had quite recently happened at his humble fireside, which necessitated on his part a regular attendance at church for a few Sundays at least, with a prospective private call at the minister's house in addition. A wee stranger had taken possession of his goodwife's knee, and, acting under the shrewd direction of his better-half, Robin had been putting in a preliminary attendance at the kirk for the past two Sunday afternoons. The interesting event was quite a new experience to Robin, and he was naturally much concerned and put about as to how he would be best able to fulfil in a proper and becoming manner all the necessary civil and religious obligations it entailed upon him. And the amount of exacting and trying work he had to face and go through in connection with the birth, registration, and church baptism of that same small six-weeks-old son and heir, fairly amazed him, and in the end all but completely dumfoundered him. Why, the whole subject, small as it was, was tied round and round with no end of formal red tape, and was officially stamped with equally red and equally formal impressions of sealing wax.

"Faith," thought Robin to himself, "it's a fine thing for the circulation o' the bluid to be a faither! It's no six weeks since I got a son an' heir, an' I've been on the happy trot efter yae thing an' anither ever since."

In the first place, the event was not a week old when Robin, the happy father, had to trudge into the town to buy a second-hand cradle. And a particularly happy man was Robin Rigg, as you may easily conceive, when carrying home that same night that very important article of domestic house furniture—a cradle. And what a cradle! He had purchased a bargain, and nothing less. The cradle he had purchased was a capacious and most substantial-looking article. In other family circles it had done veteran service in the domestic line for at least a couple of generations back. He had purchased it for three-and-sixpence,

cash down, and the article, in the lump, was about value for twice the purchase-money in old wood. Talk about rockin' twins in a cradle! Why, that same old cradle had ample accommodation for triplets—aye, or even "quadrupeds," as honest Robin sincerely put it. The cradle secured, the happy father had next to register the child's birth. This done, he was next advised by his better-half to make strict inquiry as to the best and safest method of "gettin' the pock on the wean's airm," which, once accomplished, put many squally, sleepless nights in beautiful prospect for poor Robin, with the purchase of some soothing powders, and a baby's rattle in addition!

But by far the most momentous and trying obligation which Robin was called upon to face was the ordinance of Christian baptism. The mere "haudin' up o' the bairn" in the church gave him no concern whatever, that being a question simply of physical strength. And he had lots of that. He could easily "haud up" twins, triplets, or even "quadrupeds" for that part of it. But the preliminary examination by the minister was what gave honest Robin the shakers. So long as folk sensibly kept to horse and kye, the crops, and the weather, he was right enough; but bring up the Law of Moses, or the equally confusing text of the Ten Commandments, and honest Robin Rigg was at once floored, felled, and flabergasted. But it was absolutely imperative that the child should be baptized in the regular way, at whatever personal cost. Mrs. Rigg firmly insisted on the kittle point, and there was no escape from the inevitable.

"Noo, Robin," said his worthy wife one afternoon, "ye'll snod yersel' up a bit, an' tak' a stap alang to the minister's an' arrange aboot the baptism o' the wean; for the bairn's noo haill six weeks auld, an's a braw, sonsie wean at the age, although I say't that maybe shoodna."

"An' what are we to ca't, then?" asked Robin, scratching at his puzzled head.

"Oh, what better could we dae than jist to ca't efter its ain worthy faither," answered the wife.

At this handsome compliment honest Robin smiled from ear to ear, till his unsophisticated face assumed the open expression of a well-boiled potato.

"Wee Robin! wee Robin Rigg!" muttered the delighted parent, "what a nice, naitural, nackie bit name for the wee mannie! Ay, ay, wife; I'll e'en gang an' see the minister aboot the maitter this very nicht. But d'ye ken, wife," added Robin in a sort of frightened underbreath, "I'm a wee fear't for some o' the ticklish questions he may ask me; the Commandments frichten me a'thegither."

"Oh, man, ye needna stammer owre that simple maitter; jist tell him there's ten o' them an' be dune wi't."

"Ten o' them," mechanically repeated Robin, counting over his ten fingers, "ten o' them; a' richt, I'll try an' mind that."

Within half an hour Robin was on the road to the minister's, his weather-beaten face specially washed for the occasion, and about a whole pennyworth of hair oil rubbed into the roots of his rather toozie hair to "mak' it lie doon kin' o' Christian-like," as Robin phrased it. When nearing the manse door Robin took a sudden fit of the shakers, and was so badly plucked of spirit that he was forced to go back a couple of hundred yards to the village inn for a refreshment. Arrived there, he called for "a gless o' the very best," in a burning hurry—like a man anxious to catch a train.

"Ye're in a fell hurry, Robin," remarked the innkeeper.

"Haud yer tongue; I'm gaun up to the minister's, an' I'm in sair need o' a nerve-steadyin' dram."

"Gaun up to the minister's, Robin? What's the maitter? A's richt at hame, I hope?"

"Oh, ay; a's richt enough at hame," replied Robin; "in fact, I may truly say that things are fair bloomin' owre-bye; I'm gaun to see the minister aboot a baptism."

"Whew!" whistled the inkeeper, "is that a'?"

"What! is't no plenty?"

"Plenty! man, Robin, that's but a sma' maitter to be in a way aboot; I've been thirteen times on that same errand mysel', nae less!"

"Thirteen times!" exclaimed Robin, in blank astonishment. "Faith, lad, ye've had your kail thro' the week! Thirteen times! let's see what that means. It means thirteen bottles o' whisky, thirteen cheeses, thirteen pocks on the airm, thirteen visits to the minister, thirteen public appearances in the kirk, and thirteen cradles! Faith, my man, ye'll ken a' aboot the maitter then?" added Robin, scratching his perplexed head.

"Ken aboot what, Robin?"

"Oh, the answering o' the minister's questions. He's new to the parish, ye ken, an' I'm no certain hoo he may tackle me. Besides, I'm a fair 'frost' in Scripter."

"Tuts, man, that's an easy task, Robin; it's a' as plain as a pike staff, an's as easy to answer as—'Whaur was Moses when the can'le gaed oot?' If ye but ken the simple Commandments ye'll dae brawly."

"Ay, but that's jist whaur the shae grups; ye see, I'm no deid sure o' their number, although I think oor wife tell't me there were jist nate ten, if I'm no in error there?"

"Oh, that's but a sma' maitter to hing in doubt owre," said the innkeeper, with a sly laugh; "some say there's ten, an' some mak' oot there's eleven, but gie him plenty o' them, Robin, an' ye're as safe's the bank."

This was so far good, Robin thought, but it failed to fully reassure him. The innkeeper's facetious words, however, along with his inspiring whisky, had a certain screwing-up effect on his wavering mind. So up to the door of the manse he

boldly went, and was presently standing uncovered in the presence of the veritable minister! After a cordial greeting the reverend gentleman very naturally inquired of Robin as to the immediate purpose of his visit.

"It's—it's—it's aboot oor bairn," faltered out Robin, twirling his bonnet between his hands.

"Oh! your child; nothing serious the matter, I hope?"

"No, no," said Robin, with a proud alteration of the countenance, "the bairn's only six weeks auld next Wednesday nicht, an' I may tell you he was never in better health in his life. The mistress has sent me alang to arrange wi' ye aboot the baptism."

"Oh! a baptism, is it?" said the minister. "I'm very glad to find you here on such a happy occasion. Kindly be seated for a little; you know it is necessary that we should have a little conversation, and that I should put a few simple questions to you before undertaking to baptise your child."

"Weel, then, minister, ye'll bargain no to gie's ony ticklers," put in Robin, distractedly working his bonnet in his hands.

"On the contrary, my good man; I'll try to be as plain and simple as I possibly can. Of course, you know the text of the Mosaic Decalogue?"

"The what, did you say, minister?" exclaimed honest Robin with a start.

"The Decalogue—the written law of Moses, you know?"

"If, eh—if, eh—if a conversation on the weather, or on the craps, wad pit the job by, I could meet ye hauf-way there, minister," said Robin.

"Oh, nonsense! nonsense!" said the minister. "Of course you know how many commandments there are?"

Robin scratched his head in deep perplexity. The awful suddenness of the question seemed to knock his memory all to pieces. How many commandments really were there?

he asked himself. His wife said ten; some said eleven; while the innkeeper said—"Gie him plenty o' them." Resolving the kittle question in his mind for a few moments, he at length faltered out—

"You were askin' me, minister—you were, I say, askin' me. Wad ye kindly repeat that last question, minister, as slowly and as distinctly as ye can, so that I may be able to grup the various heids o't?"

"Oh! it's simply how many commandments are there, my dear, good man?"

Robin tried to think out the question, but his memory had taken leg-bail. Remembering, however, the innkeeper's advice to "gie him plenty o' them," he stood in doubt for a moment, wondering what generous figure he might best venture on, with credit to himself and satisfaction to the minister. Perceiving his perplexity, the minister once more said, by way of encouragement—

"The question, my good man, is a perfectly simple one; it's just this: How many commandments are there?"

"Sixteen!" shouted Robin.

The minister fell back in astonishment and concern.

"Robin, my good man," he said, "you are not, I fear, quite prepared to have your child baptised."

"Oh! quite prepared, minister; I've a bottle o' whisky an' a twa-stane cheese laid by against the occasion."

"No, no, my good man; I now perceive more clearly than ever that you are not fit to hold up your child for baptism."

"What, minister! me no' fit to haud up the bairn! Man, I could haud up a young calf"—(keeping his hands see-sawing up and down in the air.) "No haud up a wean! Man, I could haud up twins, triplets, or even quadrupeds!"

"Oh, deplorable! deplorable!" sighed the dumfoundered minister. "You must go home, my dear man, and consult

your good-wife on the matter, and I'll look in on you to-morrow night, when I hope to find you better prepared for examination."

This said, the minister retired to the privacy of his study with great precipitancy, while honest Robin, thinking he had asserted his "preparedness" in proper style, set off for home.

"Weel, Robin, hoo did you succeed wi' the minister?" was the very first question put to him by his worthy wife.

"Oh, wha could succeed wi' yon learned auld buffer? He fairly knock't the breath oot o' me wi' the first question," answered Robin.

"An' whit was that, Robin?"

"Jist imagine! He wanted me to tell him, richt aff han' hoo mony commandments there are. There was a 'whussler' for ye!"

"Ye great gommeral! to stick at a trifling question like that. Didn't I tell ye plainly enough the number o' them? Siccan stupidity I never heard tell o'!"

"An' hoo mony dae you mak' them oot to be, since ye're sae very clever?" warmly retorted Robin.

"Jist ten, and neither less nor mair, as a'body weel kens."

"Ten, did ye say?—only ten? Ha, ha, ha! Woman, I offered him sixteen and he wadna look at them. But hark ye, guidwife, the minister's comin' roun' here the morn's nicht, so if ye mean to retain your Christian diploma, tak' a warnin' frae me. Avoid the rock I struck on, an' dinna ye offer the greedy auld gentleman less than twenty!"

JOHNNY SAFTY'S SECOND WIFE.

JOHNNY SAFTY was a working dyer to trade, and a widower by misfortune. He was deficient in sentiment, wore cluggs,

and lived in a small house in a back land in Linkumdoddy Lane, Road-fit, Parish of Camlachie, the door to the left, five stairs up. His first wife had been something of a slattern, a type of housewife which honest Johnny, soft as he was by name and nature, could not stand at all.

"Susan, Susan!" he used to exclaim, "when are ye thinkin' o' soopin' the floor? I'm wadin' ankle-deep in stoor and hoose-dirt; an' as for the dishes, I'm free to affirm that I've tooken my parritch oot o' that crackit bowl for the thirteenth time since it was last wash't."

Whereupon easy-osey Susan would tartly exclaim, "Noo, noo, Johnny, be canny wi' yer tongue a wee! Regairdin' that awfu' kitchen floor, I'm never dune soop, soop, soopin't—mornin', noon, an' nicht. An' as for the maitter o' dish-washin', my twa han's are never twa minutes oot o' the hot-watter pot. The dishes were a' wash't last Friday mornin', an' this is but Tuesday yet; so, what mair wad ye reasonably look for aff o' a sair-tried hoosewife, bothered, time aboot, wi' the tuithache an' the rheumatics?"

"Weel, weel, Susan," Johnny would helplessly reply, "the wife buddies maun aye hae their ain say, an' their ain way baith;" and, turning his face to the fire, he would light his auld blackened pipe-end and indulge for ten minutes in a consolatory smoke.

But there's an end to every trouble in life, and sometimes a present calamity changes into a final blessing. In time the "tuithache and the rheumatics" conjointly did for Susan, and honest Johnny Safty was left a widower. Whether Johnny actually viewed his first wife's demise as a blessing in disguise, or merely as a tholable calamity, is not exactly given to say; but it is certain that he neither mourned long nor deeply after her.

In point of fact, she was scarcely "cauld," as the saying goes, when he took up with Sarah Corkscrew, a tender and blushing auld maid of sixty. Now, Miss Sarah Corkscrew

was considered, *by herself*, a rale catch to the like o' Johnny Safty. Although she was destined to prove Johnny's second wife, she was not a second-hand yin—for though sixty, she had never been married. Her affections were, therefore, fresh and untried. Besides, Sarah Corkscrew was cleanly to a point,and that was certain to prove a new domestic experience to Johnny Safty. What was more, Sarah had a perpetual income, in her own right, of the magnificent sum of £2 10s. a year. So that, as Johnny delightedly observed to himself, "wi' Sarah Corkscrew an' her annuity in near prospect, he could never actually stairve." Johnny, obviously, was a man of extremely sanguine imagination.

Their courtship was short, but to the point. "Sarah Corkscrew," Johnny had gently whispered in her raptured ear when sitting on the banks of the silvery Clyde one night, between the Stockwell Brig and Jamaica Street—"Sarah Corkscrew, I say again, will ye be mine?"

"Oh, my feelings!—consider my shocked feelings, Mr. Safty!" exclaimed the blushing auld maid o' sixty, "an' gie me time to think."

"Noo or never!" exclaimed Johnny; "will you, will you, I ask, be mine? If so, lay your lily-white han' in mine an' pit me oot o' pain."

"Johnny, I'm yours for aye," was Sarah's answer; and the dry lips of the mature pair coming together at the moment, there was presently heard a sound which resembled the breaking of a bawbee bunch of sticks.

So the matter was settled, and very soon their marriage was an accomplished fact. But Johnny Safty's luck, even in this, his second marriage, seems to have spelled *misfortune*. He was hardly settled in his new home when he was painfully aware that he had made a mistake in getting tied to a second wife off-hand; for, if his first wife had turned out an easy-osey slattern, the second Mrs. Safty was likely to prove an over-pernickety nuisance in the matter of house-cleaning

and sweeping. Sarah, in point of fact, was clean gone in the matter of floor-scrubbing and blacklead-polishing. If Johnny chanced to leave the "sted" of his cluggs in crossing the floor when returning from the dye-work, it was an open reproach; if he ventured on a smoke, and happened to drop by accident a spittle on the hearthstone or the fender, it was a screaming offence; and if an old cronie happened to look Johnny up of a night, as old cronies will sometimes do, the said cronie was kept outside the threshold for ten minutes, scraping imaginary dust and mud off his boots before being admitted. Things went on this way till one night the pair had an open "fa'-oot" owre the business.

"O'd, Sarah!" Johnny exclaimed, after a dispute on the cleaning question, "I really wish ye wad try and tak' less pride in yer hoose, an' mair in me. Hang me, if I can sneeze in my ain hoose withoot being smartly brocht owre the coals for't. I thocht my first wife owre easy, but you're a trifle owre keen, Sarah. The very floor's scrubb't white wi' fricht; the cat's near-han' oot o' its jidgment for want o' a spot to pit its frichtit fit on; an' as for me, I wad need to sit wi' my twa feet in the air to please ye. It's only noo I can appreciate the virtues o' my lamented first wife."

"Dinna offer to even yer first wife wi' me, Johnny Safty, for that I'll no thole. It's an indignity an' a gross domestic libel; indeed, I'm no sure but it's actionable at law; so mind yer tongue, if you please."

"A fig for you an' the law baith!" retorted Johnny, stung into momentary courage; "I'll hae the yise o' my ain fireside, richt or wrang; an' what's mair, I'll smoke, an' spit, an' gang oot, an' come in as lang an' as often as I like, an' ye'll no hinder me, Sarah—remember you that!"

"Smoke as often as ye like, Johnny; but drap a single, solitary spittle on my shining fender an' ye'll rue't. When ye've an hour to spare, ye'll set-tae an' polish my scoorin'-things—d'ye hear that?"

"Hang you an' the scoorin'-things baith!" cried Johnny. "I'm fair sick o' the haill bloomin' business;" and jumping to his feet, he made for the door, to find an hour's freedom and solace with twa-three social companions in the village tap-room.

Here he found Whup-the-Cat, the village tailor; Rab Rough, the smith; and auld Davie Mortclaith, the parish sexton and kirk beadle. The three worthies were seated at an oblong deal table, before a blazing fire. Half-emptied porter-pots stood before each of them. The smith and the tailor each smoked a clay pipe, while the auld sexton, less modern in his tastes, stuck by his well-filled snuff-box, and seemed, like the others, happy for the hour.

"Weel, hoo's a' wi' ye the nicht, Johnny?" was the general salute as the new-comer entered the room.

Johnny said nothing, but only shook his head in reply.

"Sit doon, Johnny, an' help us to pit a seam or twa in the nicht's crack," said Whup-the-Cat.

"An' hoo's things gaun at hame?" asked the smith in a tone that suggested a previous knowledge of the domestic situation.

"Waur an' waur," replied Safty. "My wife has fair wash't an' scoor't me oot o' the hoose the nicht, an' I've cam doon here for an hour's peace an' quateness. She has daured me to pit a fit on the floor-heid this nicht withoot first askin' her permission, otherwise she'll mak' the parritch-spurkle become closely acquaint wi' the back o' my heid;" and John pathetically fingered the back of his head anticipatory of a new phrenological bump in that quarter.

"Jag her wi' a needle!" exclaimed Whup-the-Cat.

"Hammer her back to sense," said the brawny smith.

"Bury her," suggested the business-like sexton.

"It's as true as ye're a' sittin' there," insisted Johnny; "she's wash't the floor, or, raither, watted it, for the third time the day, and I'm threatened to within an inch o' my

life if I offer to leave a single fit-mark on't. Noo, what a man wi' cluggs is to dae under these circumstances I really am at a loss to divine."

"I have a theory," suggested Whup-the-Cat.

"Out with it," said the smith.

"What's yer plan ?" asked Johnny.

"It's this," replied Whup-the-Cat: "if Sarah 'll no let ye cross the floor on yer feet, why, then, gang in on yer han's!" A chorus of merry laughter succeeded, but poor Safty only shook his troubled head, and looked more than ever mentally astray.

"I'm in deid earnest," resumed the ingenious tailor. "Restore yer wife to reason by reversing yer perpendicularity. The trick will work a quick cure, I'll wager a sixpence. To walk intae the hoose on yer han's, wi' yer twa feet flinging in the air, like the airms o' a tattie-bogle, is the only really quick an' certain road oot o' the awkward dilemma. Try the plan, Johnny—try it."

"That wad prove a patent way o' threadin' the domestic needle," laughed Johnny; "but I'm no sure if the seam wad cairry."

"Cairry!" exclaimed the knight of the needle; "it'll cairry like a rifle shot. Try it, Johnny—try it."

"Something decided must be tried, an' that very soon, as the hoose is nae hame for me," gravely replied Safty. "If I chance to look glee'd at the fire-airns it's a faut; a spittle drap't by accident on the hearth-stane's a scandal; an' a fit-mark on the floor is positive murder; if I but sneeze, the result is look't after wi' a lichtit can'le; an' I widna venture to blaw my auld snuff-hauder in the jaud's hearing for ten thoosand worlds!"

"Hammer her into proper domestic shape," said the smith.

"Bury her," put in the auld sexton.

"Gang in on yer han's, Johnny," persisted the ingenious

knight of the needle; "it'll prove a perfect cure, I'll warrant ye—try it."

A second all-round laugh succeeded the repetition of the tailor's highly-humorous joke. For a good joke, and nothing more, the facetious knight of the needle meant it to be.

Johnny, however, took the tailor's joke in dead earnest, and after two minutes' serious consideration of the suggestion, he decided to at once act on it.

"Ye'll try it, Johnny, will ye?" put in the tailor, with a side-wink to the smith.

"This very nicht," replied Johnny; "an' if I act the daft yin onything weel, she'll think her mad scrubbin' an' scoorin' has at last tooken my heid, an' then she'll maybe drap it."

It was ringing ten by the toon clock when Johnny toddled hame that night, with a new hope in his heart, and an inspiring "wee drap in his e'e."

Johnny was a very credulous man, but had it not been for that same courage-inspiring glass of mountain dew, it is probable he would never have attempted to put into practice Whup-the-Cat's humorous joke. Johnny had pledged himself to the task, however, and he was bent on carrying it to a successful issue.

"O'd, an' if I dinna gie Sarah a fricht this nicht, when I gang in across the floor on my han's, wi' my twa cluggs danglin' in the air, my name's no Johnny Safty," said the henpecked husband, as he fought his way homewards in the face of a nor'-east wind, which was tearing down the road in his face. At length he reached his own door. A gas-jet burned languidly against the wall, shedding a yellow light along the narrow lobby. He looked at the bottom of the door, and he noticed, with a slight start, that a small portion of the lobby, immediately outside the door, was wet.

"Great sticks!" he exclaimed, "if the mad woman hasna gane an' wash't that blessed floor again since I left the hoose

twa hours since. That's the fourth time this day. The thing's past a' Christian endurance; it's positive lunacy."

Johnny meditated a moment before applying his knuckles to the door. Would he cave in, and, picking his steps carefully across the newly-wash't floor, slip cannily to bed, saying naething on the sore subject? Or, would he pluck up courage and test his luck by putting into effect the knight of the needle's laconic advice? Had Johnny's mind not been fortified with the village ale that evening, he would most probably have caved in, like the truly feeling and considerate husband he usually was. But Johnny had a gless in his e'e, and he was heroic to the point of desperation. In a figurative sense, he would have slain in cold blood the man who would at that particular moment have dared to insinuate that he, Johnny Safty, working dyer, Linkumdoddy Lane, Road-fit, Camlachie, was at the present moment, or, for that matter of it, had ever been a henpecked husband, or, indeed, anything approaching to that feeble domestic nonentity. His resolution to play the heroic was therefore taken at once, and with big hopes of success.

Throwing himself on his hands, feet up, he kicked vigorously against the door panels for admission. Presently the door was opened, and in across the newly-wash'd floor he waddled on his hands, as awkwardly as a hen stepping across a newly-macadamised road. A succession of sharp screams followed.

"Eh, me! what'a gane wrang wi' the man's heid ava?" exclaimed Sarah, Johnny's industrious second wife, as she saw her husband walking the floor in a completely inverted fashion, like a tumbling circus clown. Reaching the hearthstane, Johnny resumed his wonted equilibrium, and presently was calmly seated in a chair before the fire, philosophically blowing away at the "pipe."

"Weel, Sarah, my dear," he began, "hoo's yer washin' an' scoorin' lunacy the nicht?"

"Oh, Johnny, dear! what's gane wrang wi' ye this nicht ava! Ye've been fettlin' owre sair at the dram, I fear. Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

"No, Sarah, there's no a pennyworth o' yill wrang wi' me this nicht. I'm as sober's an archbishop, an' never was soonder in the upper storey in a' my life"—(tapping his forehead.)

"Siccan an exhibition I never before witnessed," added Sarah. "Ye're no yersel' this nicht, Johnny Safty, wha'-ever ye may turn oot to be."

"I'm maybe my kizzen, then, Sarah, or failin' that, some faur-awa relation o' my ain—eh?"

"For mercy's sake, get awa' to yer bed this very moment!" resumed the alarmed Sarah, "an' I'll throw on my shawl an' rin awa' doon for the village apothecary. It's a rising blister on the back o' yer heid ye're needin'. But I'll awa' doon to the village apothecary an' see what's wrang."

"Will ye, though?" replied Johnny; "in that case I'll be smartly after ye on my han's, feet uppermost, Sarah."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Sarah, clasping her two hands together; "the man's mind's clean reversed, an' turned tapsalterie a'thegither."

"There's no a preen pint the maitter wi' me, Sarah," retorted Johnny; "I'm as soond, heid an' heel, as a cask o' porter."

"Oh, Johnny Safty! Johnny Safty! when will ye gie up meddlin' wi' that awfu' sense-thrawin' dram?"

"When yince ye gie up wash—wash—washin' at that awfu' fit-defyin' floor," replied Johnny, with a significant nod of the head; "that's whan I'll gie it up, Sarah; but no till then."

"What hae I dune, Johnny, dear, but what ony ither daicent and cleanly hoosewife should tak' a pride in daein'—keepit my hoose clean, a credit to mysel', Johnny, an' a pleasure to you, I hope?"

"A pleasure to me, be hang't!" answered Johnny, with rising warmth. "D'ye ken this, Sarah, ye've clean wash't an' scoor't me ootside the premises an' intae the village tap-room. A woman should aye think mair o' her man than a newly-wash't floor. When a man has to rise an' gang oot-side his ain door to spit, it's aboot time he was flittin'."

"Weel, Johnny, ye'll wash the floor yersel' after this," put in Sarah.

"I will, Sarah, my dear; and remember, if ye daur to leave a single fit-mark on't ye'll suffer for't, I can tell ye!"

"I'll hae to come in on my stockin' soles, Johnny."

"Weel, ye'll either need to dae that or keep yer bed till it dries, or loup across't wi' a spring, for I'll daur ye, at yer peril, to put a solitary fit on't—remember that, Sarah!"

"Johnny Safty! Johnny Safty!" exclaimed the converted Sarah, after a short pause, "I've been acting in the wrang, I see. I've wash't an' scoor't ye clean awa' frae yer ain fireside, I noo clearly see. After this I'll think mair o' my man than my newly-wash't floor. Lang may you stap oot an' in, Johnny, for it wad be a sair day for me if death was to withdraw yer welcome fitstaps frae the hoose."

Johnny was overjoyed. The "cure" was an accomplished fact; and the agreement thus mutually made was faithfully kept, for twa happier domestic doos never picked crumbs o' pleasure at a Scottish fireside than Johnny Safty and his second wife, Sarah Corkscrew, do this day.

THE GAS-ACCOUNT MAN.

"It's the gas-accoont man," said Mattie to her husband, Robin Rough, a blacksmith in the old Calton of Glasgow. Robin—honest, hard-working man—had just come in from his day's work, and was up to his twa een in his usual evening bowl of brose.

"Great sticks!" he cried, starting up "is that the gas-accoont man again? Bring him ben."

Now, the blacksmith was a famous hand at a joke. His mind was made up in a second. Mattie, decent woman, had been bothered for the last fortnight to the very end of her judgment—which did not stretch very far—by that same collector's importunate calls. The situation had been getting tight, and the blacksmith had promised to look round at the Gas Office and pay the account that very afternoon, and lo, and behold! here was that confounded collector again! Now, the blacksmith had indeed been round at the Gas Office and faithfully paid the account according to promise, and wicked was the cunning laugh he chuckled as he suggestively fingered his waistcoat pocket wherein the receipt of payment was securely lodged. He for once had that rashly importunate collector in his power, he well knew, and he would at once proceed to humorously joke him.

"Yes, bring him in, Mattie," said the wily blacksmith; and presently debtor and creditor stood face to face.

The blacksmith looked critically at his man, judging him to be a highly interesting subject to joke with, as he very pompously stood before him, pencil and paper in hand, extensively spectacled, and attired generally in his small authority, as largely as strong assertion and high pegged-topped boots would admit of.

That same collector, in fact, was authority personified. He looked, and there was authority in his stern official gaze. He coughed, and there was authority embodied in his formal hoast. He sneezed, and there was decided authority even in his official ah-chee! Physically, he was a little man, with a large and placid opinion of himself. In the matter of business, however, his formal audacity had made him an overpowering success. He had been sore upon Mattie in consequence of the too long delayed payment

of the gas account, and now that the blacksmith had him so neatly in his power, it seemed but a fair Roland for an Oliver that he should dish up for him a repast sharpened with his own rather smart official sauce. And that humorous resolve the blacksmith at once proceeded to put into effect.

"I—I—I called for that overdue gess account," the collector rather smartly said on entering the house.

"Eh? What say ye?" said the blacksmith, reaching his left ear to within a foot of the collector's nose, pretending thereby a deafness which, of course, did not exist.

Mattie, douce woman, looked genuine surprise, which look of surprise her husband met by a counter-wink, imposing silence as plainly as a wink of the eye could do. So Mattie, decent woman, marvelled much and said nothing.

"I called for that overdue gess account, I was saying!" cried the collector, raising his thin, keen voice a full octave higher.

"Eh? What say ye?" again asked the blacksmith. "Raise yer vice abune a whisper, my chiel, for I've got a bit deafenin' cauld in my heid;" and hitching himself still closer, he narrowed by nearly twelve inches the single foot of space which separated his left ear from the collector's nasal organ.

The astonished collector sprang back fully three feet, as if his whole facial frontispiece was in extreme danger of abuse.

"Y—Y—You didn't particularly inform me of the fact that your husband was deaf," the collector remarked, addressing himself to Mattie, who looked innocence personified.

"He's waur the nicht than ever I kent him to be," very truthfully replied the guileless Mattie, with just the faintest possible glint of a smile.

"As deaf as a bed-post!" added the flustered collector; then inhaling a long breath, he shouted aloud, "It's the gess

account! the gess—account I have called for!" vigorously tapping his papers with the head of his pencil, by way of adding an official climax to his words—"it's the gess account!—the gess account!"

"What? Parnassus Mount?" echoed the blacksmith, as if a new idea of the collector's mission had dawned on his obtuse senses. "Oh, that's it, is it? Ye're a poetry chap, are ye? Na, na, my man, I canna subscribe for your book. I can ring a wheel, shae a horse, or discuss politics wi' the best o' them; but as for poetry, be hang't! I never cood get it owre my craig. Oh! ye needna fume aboot it, my man. Poetry and Parnassus Mount are a' guid enough in their place; but as for me, I'll stick by plain brose an' Ben Lomond."

The distracted collector danced about for a few moments quite picturesquely, and clutching desperately at the back of a chair for necessary support, he lifted up his voice and cried aloud—

"Confusion and stupidity! I want you, old man, to clearly and finally understand that I have called here for payment of your gess account, overdue ages ago! And that to pay it now, to me (tapping his breast), without impending expenses, will be, on your part, an act of prudential propriety."

"The Prudential Society!" exclaimed the blacksmith. "Ah! I see clearly what you're after noo. I've been labouring under a misapprehension a' alang. Ye want me to jine the Prudential Society, div ye? But let me inform you that we're already in the 'Scottish Legal'—Mattie an' me, an' yae burial society's quite enough to be connected wi'. Ye surely wadna hae us to dee twice, wad ye?"

"As deaf as Ailsa Craig!" said the excited collector. "My good woman," he added, addressing the guileless Mattie, "do, I beseech you, try to get your—your—your excruciating husband to understand the nature of my

business here. This is shocking! I—I—I feel quite exhausted—positively weak!"

"A penny a week!" broke in the blacksmith—"waur an' waur. Na, na, my chappie; nane o' yer penny-a-week funeral societies for me."

At this juncture Mattie stepped towards her husband, and, placing her mouth close to the left side of his head, she cried ben his ear—

"D'ye no understan' that the daicent man wants payment o' the gas accoont? He's gettin' hoarse wi' roarin, an' perfectly blue in the een."

"What, Mattie?—a shooin' machine? Oh, I see, I see; it's a shooin' machine that the man wants me to buy. Na, na, my fine fellow, I want nane o' yer shooin' machines at present. An' let me quately tell you this, my man: ye canvass owre mony articles to succeed weel wi' ony."

"Oh, preposterous! preposterous!" yelled the maddened collector, turning right round on his heel in an excess of anger. "Why, sir, such gross and impregnable deafness looks like a libel."

"What?—wad I no look at a Bible? Catch me. Na, na; I hiv mair auld Bibles an' Psalm-books than I'm ever likely to use. You're a book-canvasser, I noo plainly see; an' while on this point, I may jist forewarn you, as against a yiseless waste o' win', that I'll neither be coaxed nor cajoled by you or ony ither man into a purchase o' 'Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress,' nor 'Baxter's Saint's Rest,' nor 'Livingstone's Travels,' nor 'Burns's Works,' nor 'The Franco-German War,' nor Singer's shooin' machines, nor patent mangles, nor domestic wringin' machines, nor American watches, nor———"

"Stop! stop! stop!" pleaded the collector, holding his ears in despair; "deplorable! deplorable! Why, you've kept me, for the last five minutes, howling aloud to you all to no purpose, like a fox on the hills."

"What?—buy a box o' pills? Great sticks! dae ye also deal in doctor's pills. Gor, that's maist extr'or'nar'; it bates cock-fechtin'. Sir, you're beyond question a man o' very wide commercial enterprise, an' should mak' a fell big fortune yet."

"Oh, the deuce take you!" retorted the distracted collector, putting past his pencil and papers preparatory to effecting a retreat.

"It's the gas accoont, man," said Mattie, placing her mouth once more against her husband's ear, and, guessing that the joke had gone far enough, she knowingly nudged him with her elbow as she spoke.

"Oh! I see, I see," said the blacksmith, a light breaking over his grimy countenance. "Why didna ye say that at first?"

"Yes, the gess account—the gess account!" thrust in the now relieved collector, grasping at the opportune opening thus effected. "And let me distinctly tell you, sir, now that I have at last gained the hearing of your obtuse head, that if the account is not paid to-night, you'll be compelled to pay it with expenses—with expenses, remember—and within three days from this date."

"Eh, me, we're in a fine pie noo!" forebodingly said Mattie, indulging a sudden sigh, which very nearly sucked in her mutch-strings.

"Yes," sententiously added the collector, by way of a finishing climax, "pay your overdue account to me now, or stand the immediate consequences."

"It's peyed, man; it's peyed!" retorted the blacksmith, indulging in a broad and hearty laugh, which nearly connected the two sides of his mouth with his ears. "I'm jist back frae the peyin' o't at the Gas Office. Read that." And handing the nonplussed collector the receipt, he coolly awaited the issue.

The collector grasped at the receipt, glanced over it,

looked unutterably blue, and the next moment fled—papers, pencil, spectacles, authority, and all.

"Weel, he micht o' bade us good-bye,". laughed the blacksmith when the collector had fairly gone; and for a full half-hour his honest face was just one vast, substantial smile.

That same enterprising collector has lately applied for and obtained a new district.

DAVIE TOSH'S HOGMANAY ADVENTURE.

Davie Tosh was a farm-servant lad, an' had cam' lampin' intae Gleska yae Hogmanay nicht for the purpose o' haein' a roar oot o' himsel', an' seein' the New Year brocht in at the Toon Cross.

Now, Davie was a blythe, free-going, rattlin', roarin' blade, very fond o' fun', and with ne'er a grain of soorness or selfishness in his disposition. Having a few shillings in his pocket for merry disposal on the evening in question, he was not long in foregathering with twa-three chance acquaintances, who very generously assisted him to consume the numerous "wee gills o' the best" which his excessively social appetite demanded.

In this way Davie's last solitary sixpence had been melted, and his purse being now quite empty, his chance friends of an hour suddenly disappeared in some most unaccountable way.

But our friend Davie, who was already considerably better than twa-thirds fou', set little by the loss of either friends or bawbees. He was happily oblivious to all such small vexations, as he wheeled sharp about and began to somewhat loosely "stot" hamewards in the direction o' Auld Whinnyknowe, consoling himself with the remark that if he had not waited to see the New Year "brocht in" at the Toon

Cross he had, at least, had a richt guid roar oot o' himsel', which was satisfactory to Davie in a very high degree.

It was striking the hour of eleven as Davie briskly focht his way up the auld Gallowgate, for he had several long miles of open road to travel before reaching Whinnyknowe, and the snow was lying three inches thick on the streets.

Plunging straight ahead, he had not proceeded far when he drew suddenly up, and cannily concluded to spier his way ahead, as he was not more than half sure of his exact latitude.

"I'm in Gleska," he mused, as he affectionately embraced a lamp-post for support; "I'm in Gleska, but that's a' I'm sure o'. No' a daicent Christian at han' to spier the road hame at. A'body's doon at the Cross seein' the New Year brocht in, an' it's a deid frost hereaboot."

Casting "off" from his anchorage, Davie presently set forward again, indulging a highly ornamental method of progression by making, now a leeward bicker, now a back lurch, and now a precipitate forward plunge.

"Thrawn wark this," he added, as he gathered himself up from a stiff fa' on the pavement. "It's no easy gettin' alang thir confoonded uneven Gleska streets. I wish I saw mysel' yince mair back at Auld Whinnyknowe—safe in my bed atween the wife an' the wa'! I'm in the vera heart o' Gleska, certainly, but I'd be mair at hame atween the ploo-stilts, I'm thinkin'. But, hillo! wha's yon stannin' glowerin' straucht across the street at me?" he continued, very naturally mistaking an iron Post-Office pillar-box for a man. "Faith, lad, I'll across the street, an' spier my way hame at ye, as ye seem aboot the only man on the road," and full of genial anticipation, largely compounded of loose fancy and raw whisky, Davie dived across the street, and momentarily stood in the dumb presence of the snow-wrapt pillar-box, which looked not unlike a stout little man, wrapt up to the twa ears in a greatcoat.

"Ye're there, auld man," said Davie; "a guid New-Year t'ye!" and he frankly extended the hand of friendship to the dumb article addressed.

"Ay, ay," sneered Davie, "sae ye'll no return my frien'ly greeting!" and half-inquiringly he kept staggering around the pillar-box, which, with its round, short body, surmounted by a broad-shaped Tam o' Shanter shaped top, looked for all the world like the counter-part of a dumpy, well-fed, middle-aged shopkeeper. "Man, ye're a dour, unsocial sort o' a bit body!" continued Davie; "but maybe ye'd tell's the road to Whinnyknowe, if ye'll dae naething mair! Speak twa words to a freen, man, an' no stand dumbly there wi' yer han's in yer coat-pouches, an' yer bannet drawn doon owre the point o' yer nose," and steadying himself for a moment, by a strong effort of will, Davie stuck his thumbs inside the armpits of his waistcoat, and surveying his silent friend, sarcastically resumed:—

"Ye're there, are ye? ye blin' auld deaf-an'-dumb doddie! Stannin' there under the hap o' yer muckle coat an' yer Kilmarnock bannet, wi' yer tongue stack atween your teeth, an' nae mair Christian feelin' in yer breist than's in this auld hat o' mine."

Losing his balance, however, while he yet spoke, Davie staggered backwards several paces, and ultimately fell "clyte" down on the middle of the street.

Sitting still there for a moment, with head erect, and glowerin' eyes, he presently noticed a thin, smart-motioned little man stealthily approach the pillar-box with hurried and furtive gesture, who was none other than the Post-Office bag-lifter, doing his late rounds.

Now Postie was on this occasion somewhat behind time in lifting the "bags," having been tasting with a friend—a very pardonable slip in view of the conviviality of the season—and he was now intent on making up for lost time by hurrying through with his work.

Glancing suspiciously around, as if to avoid notice, Postie stepped close up to the pillar-box, and at once began unlocking the small door for the purpose of lifting and carrying away the bag of letters suspended inside.

Davie, past active interference for the moment, eyed Postie's movements where he sat, judging him, with lightning activity, to be nothing less than a burglar, intent on committing a midnight robbery on the person of his unknown friend.

In a moment Postie had flung open the pillar-box door, and removed the bag of letters.

"If the plunderin' loon hasna open't the chiel's topcoat, and rifled his twa breeks' pouches clean!" thought Davie. "A street robbery, or my name's no Davie Tosh! Hy, hy, there! murder! robbery! thieves! police!" sang out Davie, and struggling heroically to his lost feet, he was just in time to witness Postie turn sharp round, and make a hurried exit from the spot.

Now, Postie in his great haste to get back to official headquarters, literally ran for it, and honest Davie, very naturally concluding that the burglar had taken sudden fright, and was running off with the stolen booty, followed hard after, in close, but irregular pursuit, shouting out as he ran, "STOP THIEF! CATCH THE THIEF! CATCH THE THIEF!"

"Fat's all tiss row apoot?" asked a Highland constable, suddenly emerging from a publican's side-door.

"Yon's the row," replied Davie, pointing at the retreating figure of Postie. "The burglar-loon has robbit yon wee mannie owre-bye yonder, at the pavement edge. I saw him lowse the chiel's topcoat, rifle his pouches, fling his purse across his left shoother, an' syne mak' aff; an' nae trifling size o' a purse it was, I can tell ye," added Davie, by way of a climax; "it was as lang as a sheep's bag."

"Oich, oich," laughed the official Donald, who for once

had the joke all to himself, "she'll no be a tief at al; she wass be a wrocht in ta Posht Offish."

"The Post Office be hanged!" retorted Davie; "I'm thinkin' it's the Pollis Office the rascal should be in. But come awa' back, an' see what the wee buddy's sayin' til't."

"Oich, oich! Did you'll no circumstood what I'll told you? She's no a man at al; she's ta Posht Offish Pox."

"The Post Office Pox! Weel, I've heard in my day o' the Chicken Pox, and the Sma' Pox, but I never till noo heard tell o' the Post Office Pox!"

"Did she'll thocht it was a man?"

"An' what else could it be but a man? Did ye ever see a woman wearing a top-coat, and a Kilmarnock Tam o' Shanter bannet?"

"Oich, oich! you wass be seein' through ta wrang glasses; go away home, my goot man, without further loss of delay," and Donald strode loftily on.

"The wrang glasses!" soliloquised Davie; "I'm seein' through the 'wrang glasses,' am I? That canna be, seeing that I never wore 'specks' in my life. But ye're awa, are ye, Mister Pollisman! An' ye'll no mak' a case o't! Weel, tak' care, then, that Davoc Tosh disna mak' a 'case' o' you! Fine protectors of the people! A daicent man may be knockit doon and robbit on the public street, an' deil a bobby 'ill claw a deaf lug owre't! But I'll slip awa' owre an' see what the wee mannie's saying till't himsel'."

A moment after, Davie once more stood in the presence of his silent friend, addressing him with a rousing: "Hillo there, auld man! what's in yer blessed heid that ye're stannin' there stock still, an' yer bag o' siller awa'—eh?" Getting no response, he caught the pillar-box by the shoulders, and strove to shake it into a comprehension of the desperate situation.

"Faith," quo' Davie, as the pillar-box resisted his utmost efforts to move it, "ye maun surely be frozen stiff to the

grund!" Then he next bent down, and looked inquiringly into the wee man's face, beholding it, to his manifest surprise, lettered all over with "Postal Intelligence!"

Quickly the truth at last dawned in upon Davie's mixed mind, and clutching wildly at his hair for support, he exclaimed:—

"Gor-a-me, but the Hielan bobbie has had the best end o' the stick for yince in his life! I'm e'en seein' this nicht thro' owre mony 'glasses'—spectacles or no spectacles! Guid-bye, frien,' guid-bye! I'm no likely to meet ye in the flesh again, for if Postie hasna robbed ye' o' yer purse, he's at least awa' wi' yer stammack; an' I'm thinkin' a body withoot a stammack is in a fully waur condition than a man withoot a purse?"

And, wheeling sharply about, Davie Tosh made instant tracks for the douce farm-lands o' Auld Whinnyknowe.

GLESKA MUTTON, 4d. PER POUND.

In a snug little corner of an old-fashioned building, situated at the foot of Saracen's Lane, in the old Gallowgate of Glasgow, stood, nearly half a century ago, the homely but comfortable chop-and-dram-shop of worthy auld Sandy M'Craw.

Now, old Sandy M'Craw, the landlord of the chop-and-dram-shop in question, was a remnant of an antecedent generation, like the old-fashioned building in which his chop-house stood, and carried down with him till a more modern day the tastes, habits, and modes of thought peculiar to the generation preceding the advent of steam. For that reason, along with the fact that his roast chops as well as his dram were good, Sandy's chop-house was a well-patronised little snuggery, where right douce and worthy old town burghers and bailies could meet, without

provoking remark, to get their "twal-hours' dram," or partake of their afternoon chop in ease and comfort, the after-dinner sederunt being often prolonged well into the hours of night; and which sederunt, when the company, like the dram, was good, was often extended to cock-craw on the following morning.

To resume, Sandy M'Craw's wee chop-and-dram-shop was ringing one night with rich, oily, and saponaceous jokes and laughter, and in a small back-room of M'Craw's chop-house, were seated, on the night instanced, Bailie Stout and some half-dozen local worthies, whence issued the saponaceous laughter alluded to.

Bailie Stout was an undersized, but exceedingly corpulent municipal magistrate. He was constructed physically on what are graphically termed "Dutch lines." In Scotch phrasing, he was about "as braid as he was lang." The extra flesh which he carried on his body, however, was not at all typical of the milk of human kindness. He was a man of self-seeking motives and principles, and his bodily padding was that of the gourmand, whose delight is in juicy chops and foamy porter. Selfish in the gratification of his appetites, he had never a thought beyond himself and his own bodily ease and comfort. He had risen from the ranks and was a bitter opponent of the social advancement and political claims of the toiling masses. Originally a working weaver, he had become a property factor, and shortly after getting into the Town Council had succeeded in buying considerable property in the business portions of the town, principally in the Candleriggs, mostly as the result of adroit financing with the Corporation funds and contracts.

In the spring of 1848 the exceeding dull trade of the country had reached such an acute stage in Glasgow that the opening of soup kitchens was discussed in the Council Chambers, and the formation of "relief works" for the able-bodied unemployed openly advocated as a necessity.

Bailie Stout and one or two others of his colleagues had stiffly opposed these generous proposals, and had hence acquired a particularly bad reputation among the starving thousands of the city. In fact, Bailie Stout had been threatened with mob law if he persisted in his selfish opposition. He did persist, being a very determined man, but did not succeed in carrying his harsh negative to the more generous and humane resolutions of the town magistrates. And this brings us in touch with Bailie Stout relative to the conversation occurring round the social table in old Sandy M'Craw's chop-and-dram-shop on the particular evening instanced.

"It's my opinion, Bailie," said Willie Walsh, an ironmonger in the Trongate, "it's my serious opinion that something will hae to be done for the unemployed in the toon, if a public bread riot's to be avoided."

"Hoots awa', Willie," was Bailie Stout's rejoinder; "it's a season o' starvin' the rascals are needin'. What wi' their reform bill fads, their household suffrage bills, and their levelling-doon radicalism, the unconscionable loons are neither to haud nor to bind. I'd let them feel the bottom o' their stammacks, Willie, an' they'll ever afterwards recognize the fact that honest wark is before dishonest politics ony day. That's a bit of guid chop Sandy's sent in to us the nicht, eh?"

"Jist grand, Bailie," acceded Robin Proudfoot, a retail chandler in the Saltmarket; "but while ye praise Sandy's juicy chop, there's nae necessity for ye sittin' sae sair on the toon radicalism. The Chartists hae some grand men amang them, and their political programme's a just measure. As for giein' the puir loons a starvin', Bailie, why, they've been a' but starved this hale winter already, wi' nae prospect o' things mendin', either, which mak' affairs even worse."

"Stuff an' nonsense, Robin! sheer stuff an' nonsense!" retorted Bailie Stout; "keep the diet doon. A fu' wame,

ye ken, mak's a stiff prood back. That's a nice, fresh, foamy jug o' porter; slips owre the craig like a spunefu' o' jeel."

At this juncture Sandy M'Craw, the veritable landlord of the chop-house, usually called the laird, entered the room without ceremony, and with a look on his face which obviously meant business of some kind.

"What's the time o' nicht, laird?" asked Willie Walsh, "time we were liftin', I suppose, eh?"

"Hoots, the nicht's no that faur gane; it's no struck twal yet, though it's fast makin' for't," answered the douce landlord, "but I've a message for ye, Bailie."

"Wha brings in the message, Sandy?"

"A bit callant aff the street, as far's I can judge; tippence wad send him here or farrer as fast's a trotting pownie."

"Ay, ay; an' I wonder what it can be?" mused the Bailie, rising and putting on his night-hap—a green-coloured, warmly-padded cloak of ponderous width and depth. "It's maybe a watter-pipe that's burst in the hoose? or a burglary that's tooken place? or maybe the hoose is on fire? or——"

"Maybe a deputation frae the Toon Cooncil wantin' ye to become Provost next term, Bailie, wha kens?" put in Robin Proudfoot, the retail chandler. "Let me help ye on wi' yer cloak, Bailie; therena; that's it."

"Weel, I'm sorry to hae to rise an' rin, freens, but business, like time an' tide, wait's on nae man, ye ken; sae I'll bid ye'se a' guidnicht till we next meet."

"The hour's late, Bailie, an' I think we should a' rise an' gang hame thegither," said Willie Walsh, the Trongate ironmonger. "We're safer an' merrier in the lump, ye ken."

"Deed no, freens, ye'll a' sit still an' finish yer stowps. I've a guid pair o' legs, a guid pair o' lungs, and a guid stick in my nieve, an' wha daur meddle wi' me? Touch me, an'

there'll be crackit nappers gaun, I can tell ye." And with a fussy gait and a slightly unsteady step Bailie Stout bustled effusively out of the room.

The night was still wet and blusterous when Bailie Stout set off for his place of residence in Bath Street.

The street was all but deserted of wayfarers, the hour being so late, for the Bailie had hardly proceeded a hundred yards west when he distinctly heard the bells in the old Cross steeple toll out the hour of twelve.

"The nicht's a bit farrer gane than I thocht it was," the Bailie remarked to himself as he peched and blew in his efforts to fight down the opposing blasts of wind, which caught him powerfully in the broad abdomen, and shook him stiffly as a dog does a rat. The rough tearing night wind had evidently no consideration for Bailie Stout's magisterial dignity and body corporate. It twirled the scanty locks of iron-grey hair that hung aback of his fleshy neck; it smote him on breast and stomach, as if with the blows of a shut fist, knocking him both out of wind and temper; it filled his spacious pockets; it got between the inter-spaces of his great, baggy, green cloak, and forcing the hanging extremities between his two legs seriously checkmated his forward progress, and not unfrequently all but overcame his power of pedal locomotion.

Very soon he had reached the foot of the brae which once characterised the Gallowgate of Glasgow, and was just opposite the dark opening of the once well-known "Elephant Closs," when he was suddenly seized from behind with a firm hand, and somewhat rudely thrown upon his back on the pavement. This unceremonious treatment, which was as unexpected as it was outrageous, fairly flabbergasted the bumptious Bailie, who gasped out his wrath and indignation in somewhat mixed terms—

"Pollis! pollis! Let go, ye murderin' loons! ye thievin'

rascals! Help! help! Auch! whoo! whurroo!—whurroo!"

The Bailie's threats and expostulatory gutturals, however, were of no avail. In two seconds he found himself stretched lengthwise on his back, and beheld standing over him several men with blackened faces, whose teeth and eyes shone with peculiar force, in contrast with their darkened countenances.

"What is't ye're after, ye murderin' vagabonds?" he shouted aloud, when he had once more recovered his partially suspended breath. "Fegs, an' I had my liberty back, an' ye before me on the bench, I'd saut and pepper yer hides, ye thievin' gang o' fit-pads!"

"Justice, Bailie Stout, justice!" answered one of the blackened faces. "You have publicly ridiculed the claims of the poor and the unemployed of the city, and as their deputies we hereby intend to expose your carcase for public sale and subsequent removal to the police mortuary, or, perhaps, the dead-meat market.

"What! are my twa lugs hearin' richt?" replied the overthrown Bailie. "Is't possible ye're gaun to murder me in cauld bluid? ye gang o' toon runagates! Aff han's ye ne'er-dae-weels! Murder and blue-sticks! let me up this instant, or, by my faith, as sure as I'm a leevin' magistrate this nicht, the lot o' ye'll hang for this the morn. Let me up, will ye?"

And here the outraged Bailie kicked and wrestled for his freedom with surprising vigour on noticing that his blackened assailants were proceeding to tie his two hands behind his back with a piece of old clothes-rope which they had provided for the purpose.

"See that his two hands are well secured behind his back, Port-Glasgow," said the principal of the gang, "and you, Greenock, lay the weight of your body across his legs to keep down his kicking; he flings like a vicious old colt."

"An' wha wadna kick an' fling, ye rascals!" again sang

out the wroth Bailie. "To be set upon in sic a fashion! But ye needna nickname yersels Port-Glasgow this, Dumbarton yon, an' Greenock the ither thing, thinkin' ye'll thereby manage to blin' the law; for within eicht short days the hale jing-bang o' ye'll be sittin' wi' close-cropped nappers, teazin' oakum in Duke Street; sae mind yer han', my fine chaps, an' ca' quate an' canny if ye mean to save yer necks frae a guid hemp-rape streechin'."

"Dry up, old rusty wig, will you!" once more said the principal, with an angry snap. "Where's Bob Dumbarton?" he suddenly asked, addressing his blackened confederates.

"He's gone round to Peter Paisley's."

"Oh, jist say Sam Camlachie's, an' be dune wi't," put in the Bailie, who had the spunk of a full-sized man, short in stature as he was.

"Will you please dry up? old greasy chops!" shouted one of the gang.

"Never while the breath o' the old Gallowgate air's in my body!" replied the self-conscious Bailie. "I'm a Gleska magistrate, mind ye, an' if ye an' me live thegither for twa weeks hence tak' my word for't ye'll sweat for this, the hale jing-bang o' ye, mind I tell ye!"

"Where, I ask," resumed the principal, "has Bob Dumbarton gone to?"

"He's gone round to Peter Paisley's—."

"Say Sam Camlachie's, an' be dune wi't," once more thrust in the impounded Bailie.

"He's gone round, I was sayin' to Peter Paisley's for a fresh piece of rope to string up our victim to the lamp-post."

"What?" yelled the now truly-alarmed Bailie, "are ye really gaun to hang me frae the tap o' the lamp-post? Murder! pollis! help! help!"

"Ah, here's Bob Dumbarton with the tether. Lose no time, men, in case a couple of the Highland 'Charlies'

come slap down on us. Out with the rope, and get his stout carcase hung up and duly ticketed. Great America! he kicks like a cavalry horse. Wo-oh. Steady there, old man."

"What are ye after, sir, I ask ye?" once more demanded the alarmed Bailie, struggling round towards the principal. "For yer ain sake mair than mine, no to speak o' the credit o' the law, hae a care o' what ye're ettlin to dae."

"Oh, confound the law!" retorted the person addressed, "there's too much law and too little justice in this country —especially for the poor and the unfortunate. It's a nice country for a rich man to live in, this is, but it's starvation and bitter misery for a poor man. Sling him up, men; we'll very soon offer the starving public fine, fresh, well-fattened pork, in the person of Bailie Stout, at 4d. per pound, with the choice of cut, too! Do your duty, men; stuff up his speaking trumpet, and string him up to the nearest lamp-post without useless ceremony."

"My goodness!" once more cried aloud the now completely horrified Bailie, "is there no a confoonded Hielan' pollisman about, an' a toon Bailie's valuable life in the han's o' a gang o' cut-throats, an' hingin' by a mere threid? But, hark ye, my billies, if there's law in Scotland—ow!—"

The remainder of the ejaculatory threat was not finished, on account of one of the gang stuffing a pocket handkerchief into the victim's mouth, the which having been crossed with a second napkin, drawn tight round his jaws and tied at the back of his head, effectually prevented any further vocal demonstrations on the part of the now gagged, handcuffed, and pinioned victim.

The Bailie's assailants were all strong, able-bodied men, and with little exertion they caught up their victim in their arms, and having smartly slipped a running bow-line under his arms, they hoisted him, head up, to the arm of the nearest lamp-post. A few swirls of spare rope, and Bailie Stout was left dangling from the top of the lamp-post, with

his two rather large and decidedly flat feet fixed about thirty-six inches above the ground, in a position which was certainly greatly more picturesque than edifying.

"Get out the price-ticket, men," said the directing principal, "loose no time—quick!"

"Ay, ay, sir," responded the person alluded to as Bob Dumbarton, and in three seconds more a large specially-prepared, hand-painted trade ticket was pinned to the victim's breast, the vari-coloured lettering of which read thus !—

IMPORTANT PUBLIC NOTICE.

FINE FRESH GLASGOW PORK,

ONLY 4D. PER LB.

WARRANTED REAL HOME FED.

N.B.—Whereas, a certain Glasgow Bailie having refused the unemployed of the town assistance, the starving passer-by is hereby invited to take a free "cut" off Bailie Stout's magisterial gigot, and so appease his hunger.

By Order of the Committee of the Town Unemployed.

"Now, Sir Bailie, may you hang there till there's no more flesh left on you than you'd like to see on your starving fellow-citizens, whose only crime is their unmerited poverty," said the principal of the group. "And now, good-bye, and a right merry swing t' ye!"

This said, the half-dozen masked men hurried off in opposite directions by preconcerted understanding, as if to avoid pursuit, leaving poor outraged Bailie Stout dangling by the waist from the lamp post to which they had firmly roped him, full of fuming wrath at the insult put on him, but unable to articulate a single word, by way of easing his passion, on account of the gag which they had stuffed into his distended mouth.

The highly-humiliating personal outrage thus perpetrated on Bailie Stout was a most amusing, although quite indefensible, proceeding. It was a sort of local lynch-law escapade, the natural reaction of a tyranny too tightly and too openly exercised by the victim against his unfortunate fellow-men, whose greatest, and indeed only crime, was their enforced poverty—a condition certainly not of their own seeking nor deserving.

Poor Bailie Stout was in a humiliating fix, and clearly the odds were, for the time being at least, in the hands of his enemies. But, wait-a-wee! Somebody wad hing for't if there was law in Scotland!

The perpetrators of the amusing outrage had scarce turned the corners of the various streets along which they separately decamped, when a "fou" tailor came rolling up to the spot.

A "fou" Scotchman, apart from the total abstinence principle, is always an interesting study to the observer of human nature; a "fou" tailor is, for many reasons, very especially so.

Now, Johnny Seam, the tailor in question, was a study in himself, apart from his trade and his tippling habits, which were notorious.

He stood five feet neat in his stockings, and was proud of his miniature stature. He weighed six stones seven with his stick leg, which would have scored for him the additional half-stone had he been permitted to wear the amputated limb.

Johnny, with the gallantry and spunk of extra little men, had married, early in life, Maggie Howie, a local washerwife, who was the exact opposite of himself in physical characteristics. She was six feet in stature, and weighed sixteen stones in her corsets.

It was a case of love at first sight on the wee tailor's side, Washer-Maggie's vast bulk having completely filled the soul, as well as the two arms. of the enterprising knight

of the needle. Three months of married life, however, was said to have rudely awakened the uxorious little tailor out of his love day-dreams. At least, when asked how he and Maggie were getting on, Johnny's invariable answer for many a day after marriage was couched in a smart poetical quotation from Burns:—

> When first big Maggie was my care,
> Heaven, I thocht, was in her air;
> Noo, we're married, spier nae mair,
> But whistle owre the lave o't.

But Johnny had decidedly a spunk above a mouse, and when Maggie grew nettlesome the spry wee tailor would jump aff the board, hop across the floor in the direction of his handy stick leg, screw it on, and forthwith set out for the tailor's "ca'-house," from which he seldom returned home sober, and never much before the "wee short hour ayont the twal."

It was during his hame-coming, on one of these festive occasions, that our little tailor friend stumbled on the rare and diverting exhibition of Bailie Stout's body corporate dangling from a street lamp-post at the foot of the Gallowgate.

The novel sight exercised him much. He stopped abruptly, as a lobby clock will do when a house fly gets into the inter-spaces of the teethed wheels. Then he rolled around the spectacle, narrowing at every turn the diameter of the circle until he had drawn up right before the suspended body of the immolated Bailie. Then he stopped, balanced himself by a supreme effort of science, mixed with will, on his one solid foot of flesh, and manfully strove to steady his swaying body with his remaining iron-virled leg of wood.

"Eh—eh—eh—man, what are ye daein' speelin' up there, eh?" was the fou tailor's salutation on first dimly perceiving the obtuse fact that a body corporate was attached in some funny way to a street lamp-post. "Co—co—come doon, ye daft auld fule, or I'll te—te—tell the pollis;

sclim—sclim—sclimbin' up there just like a French m—m—monkey!"

Perched on his "high abode," poor pechin' and panting Bailie Stout was unable to utter an articulate word, on account, principally, of the gag which his assailants had stuffed into his mouth. He was, in point of strict fact, all but past kicking, having previously exhausted himself in that picturesque way half-an-hour before. The Bailie, however, succeeded in making a convulsive movement of the body, as if he had heard, and only too accurately understood, the import of the question put to him.

"Wh—wh—what are ye hotchin' at, eh?" resumed the mixed knight of the needle. "Can ye no answer a ceevil question when it's daicently p-p-put? Eh, Lord help us! I s—s—see what's wrang wi' the ch—ch—chiel noo. He—he—he's gotten a bit dram like mysel', an' he—he—he's up the lamp-post looking for a li—li—licht for his p—p—pipe. That what he's after."

Then the tailor took a fresh run around the suspended *habeas corpus* of the Bailie, and presently drew up once more right in front of the inert victim, who had suddenly relapsed into absolute quiescence.

"But stop awee till I s—s—see what it really is, whether it's a man or a monkey?" resumed the confused tailor, getting out his specks with great care and formality. "Lord, bless me! jist as I jaloused; it's a m—m—man, an' he's up the tree lookin' for a licht to his p—p—pipe! Weel, I've heard tell o' Darwin's de—de—development theory, an' o' man being descended frae a m—m—monkey, b—b—but if that man's great gran'faither wisna a ring-tailed cocoa-nut eater, I'll eat my auld h—h—hat. Hey, man! You up in the t—t—tree, there, come doon an' I'll gi'e ye a m—m—match!"

There was no response, however, save a slight twirl of the trunk, which the mixed tailor half guessed was caused by

the force of the wind. Once more he ran around the object, and having first "dichted," and afterwards readjusted his "specks" on his rather weak nose, his eyes caught, for the first time, the important public notice written in large letters on the placard pinned to the victim's breast.

"Great Jamaica!" once more broke forth the astonished tailor, "it's no a m—m—man ava, it's a b—b—butcher's signboard, an' a sample o' quality. What! mutton only f—f—fowrpence the pund; wi' yer choice o' a c—c—cut aff the m—m—magisterial jiggot. Weel, I've heard tell o' p—p—pope's eye steak—(hic)—but I'll be h—h—hanged if ever I heard tell o' magisterial mutton. But it's a' richt, it's a' richt; I'm three-fourths sprung the nicht, it's true, an' maybe seein' things d—d—double, but 'ill vera soon solve the problem as to the species to which this—eh—eh, this eh — sort o'— sort o'— eh — lamp-post sample mutton belangs," and proceeding to act on his resolution, the confounded knight of the needle at once snipped from his trouser pocket a small pocket knife, with which he intended to make good for himself a "cut" off the magisterial jiggot, as per advertisement. In two seconds the miraculous tailor had jerked open the blade of his pocket knife, and thereafter made a firm seizure of Bailie Stout's left foot, the better to effect his purpose.

Meantime, the unfortunate victim was in an extremity of dire terror, having been from the first quite cognisant of all that was transpiring before him, although practically unable to expostulate. The half mad and "hale fou" tailor had evidently accepted his body corporate as that of a sheep's, exposed for public sale, and placed there, directly under the gaslight, to enable the passers-by to judge of its quality, and take due notice of its existence and low price. Agonising thought! the insane idiot was about to test the conundrum by sticking the blade of a pocket knife into the calf of his (Bailie Stout's) leg.

The Bailie's mind was at once made up. Indeed, not a moment was to be lost. The situation was trying in the extreme—was, in fact, positively dangerous to life and limb. Another moment and the dirty, tobacco-stained blade of the "fou" tailor's pocket-knife would most certainly be driven into his leg! After that, there was nothing for it but amputation and a prospective stick-leg, similar to the "fou" tailor's own iron-virled road-stamper. The thought was appalling; further hesitation fatal. Making a supreme effort, the hitherto inert mass of magisterial mutton drew up its right leg, and letting fly straight out, struck the disordered tailor a vigorous blow on the pit of the stomach which sent him, in a figurative sense, about half-way into the middle of the succeeding month, as it practically did into the middle of the street.

"Blue verdigris!" yelled aloud the confounded tailor, when he had at length recovered his suspended breath and senses, "when deid sh—sh—sheep can kick like that, it's high t—t—time Johnny Seam was snug on the bedside o' his ain ingle cheek!" And, picking up his hat along with his scattered limbs and senses, the disordered tailor made a frantic dash eastward along the Gallowgate as fast as his stick-leg could carry him, with a settled conviction in his mind that "magisterial mutton," as per advertisement, was a dark fraud, and dead sheep an unknown quantity in the Glasgow Gallowgate!

END OF SECOND SERIES.

Scotch Readings

Scotch Readings

Humorous and Amusing

THIRD SERIES

By

Alexander G. Murdoch

Author of "Recent and Living Scottish Poets"

"Laughter costs nothing and is worth much"

GLASGOW: THOMAS D. MORISON
LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS & CO
1889

PREFACE.

In issuing a third series of *Scotch Readings*, the author desires to thank both press and public for the hearty receptions accorded to his two previous issues.

The present series has been conceived and drawn on lines of treatment somewhat similar to his former efforts, the Readings here presented being exclusively Scotch both in character and treatment.

For this there need be no apology. That a desire for humorous Scotch portraiture and dialogue in humble life is a wide-spread one, is fully attested by the Scotch literature which at the present day is being so largely reproduced by the publishing world.

The taste so gratified is a sound one, and reflects not a little on the sensible side of Scotch character, which still maintains an interest in the national credit and individuality of their country.

Regarding the humorous vein so predominant in these Readings, that has been exclusively adopted as being best suited to wants and tastes of the classes for whom they have been mostly prepared.

That the present series may be as favourably received as were the two former issues, is what the author naturally hopes and expects, in which case he will consider himself sufficiently rewarded for his labours.

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SCOTCH READINGS.

THIRD SERIES.

JEAN TAMSON'S LOVE HOPES, AND FEARS.

JEAN TAMSON was a mature, snuff-loving virgin of some five-and-fifty lovely summers, who made a fat living by keeping men-lodgers.

She was a large and very stout woman. In spite of her size and weight, however, perhaps on account of that, she had never been, up till date, lifted off the hook, as the phrase goes. Not but what she could have been, often enough. Oh, no! The offers she had refused in her day were many. At least Jean maintained so, and as she had a raucle o' a tongue when angered, her affirmations were seldom openly questioned.

"A braw mornin', Jean, hopin' I see ye as weel's ye should be," was Peggy Nacnab's neighbourly salutation, as she stepped in across Jean's doorstep one forenoon.

"Thank'ee; I'm about my or'nar, which is fashed a wee, but gey weel on the whole," replied Jean, pushing a chair towards her visitor. "An' hoo are ye haudin' yersel', Peggy?"

"Oh, weel, I'm no' that ill if I could only get rid o' the wind on my stomach. It jist blaws roun' my heart like the win' roun' the fit o' a hill."

"I've a bit guid drap o' speerits in the press, if ye'd care aboot a taste? It's capital for breakin' the wind, an' wi' a bit peppermint-drap an' a snuff after't it's jist fair Paradise," handing Peggy the snuff-box as a preliminary.

"Jist a wee thimblefu' o' the speerits, if *you* please, Miss Jean—jist the wee'st thimblefu'. It flees to my heid like a bit lichtit paper up a lum."

Thus instructed, Miss Jean went towards a small press, built in the wall, from a "ben" corner of which she extracted a black quart bottle, out of which she proceeded to pour into an old-fashioned china tea-cup a portion of the black bottle's inspiring contents.

"Noo, jist the wee'st thochtie, Miss Jean, if *you* please," again put in Peggy, as her hostess tilted up the bottle. "I'm a' but teetotal in practice, ye ken; an' if oor man jist smell't it on me, wouldn't there be a bonnie how-dy'e do!"

"Row here, or row yonder," replied Jean, "dinna ye turn awa' yer sonsie face frae the mercies when they're set on the table afore ye. Here, pit owre that," handing the well-filled china cup to her visitor.

Peggy took the cup in her hand, and saw that the decoction given her was as white as milk. With a feeling of wonder expressed on her homely countenance, she first looked at the white-coloured liquid, then at Miss Jean, then again at the liquid, and finally at her hostess once more.

"Ye're wonderin' at the colour o't, Peggy, I see," put in the stout lodging-wife. "Let me explain't. Ye see, a single woman like me needs to guaird her reputation, mair especially whaur there's men lodgers in the hoose an' lowse tongues aboot the back coort. So I aye jist pit a drap o' mulk in the whisky to colour't, an' I can then pour oot a taste o't in onybody's presence withoot settin' a bad example, or raisin' a clatter o' ahint-back talk. I'm sair fash't wi' the watter-brash mysel'—in fact, I'm a perfect martyr to't—

an' there's naething quatens't doun like a wee hue o' speerits. Coloured wi' the mulk, it can be used withoot suspicion at either kirk or market."

"Eh, Miss Jean," innocently replied Peggy, "that accoonts, then, for what the neibours say regairdin' yer wonderfu' fondness for coo's mulk."

"What! dae they ackwally say sae?" asked the stout lodging-wife, with a quick change of countenance, her tongue ready for a run.

"Oh, it's rumoured that yer twa lips are never aff the coo's teat."

This touched Miss Jean's weak point. Sticking her two shut hands into her stout haunches, she started off on one of her hot two-mile-long tirades, which, when once set a-going, neither expostulations nor diplomacy could arrest.

"A fine thing," she burst out, "that a dacent, hard-workin', respectable single woman canna turn her heid roun' but a wheen idle, yisless, clatterin' hoosewives maun impidently note an' mark it! Wha had the audacity to mak' remarks on me? Was't auld splay-fitted Kate o' the Back Sheuch? or glee'd e'ed Jenny Broon, the Lanark carrier's low wife? or saft-heided, silly-tongued Eppy Blair, Coal Jock's wearifu' handfu'? Was it each, or ony o' them? Tell me, an' I'll throw a shoother-shawl owre my heid this minute an' braw smartly I'll settle accoonts wi' the ill-minded jauds."

In this way Jean carried on for some minutes, quite unmindful of Peggy's soothing disclaimers, till she had fairly run herself out of both words and breath.

"No, no, Miss Jean," ever and anon broke in Peggy, in soothing, dulcet tones; "dinna fash yersel' aboot a wheen idle clashes, that's jist like the wind, made to blaw by. I'll taste yer speerits wi' great pleasure, wishin' ye baith health an' guid luck."

This said, Peggy turned off her cup of doctored milk with wonderful success for a teetotaler in practice, in which

action she was quickly seconded by Miss Jean, who proceeded to fill up the old-fashioned china cup once more, inviting her visitor to put the smell of the first cupful away with that of a second.

"No, no, dear Miss Jean, no anither drap, if *you* please. It's a gran' coo ye get yer mulk frae, I maun confess; but I maun keep strict teetotal, for if oor man was to jist smell't on me, there wad be a bonnie how-d'ye-do, I can tell ye."

"Is he teetotal himsel', then, your man?" asked the stout lodging-wife, with a touch of sarcasm in her voice.

"Nae mair than you are—that is, than I am—or rather, than, than—than—— Faugh! I jist simply mean to say that he's no' teetotal ava'. It's thae awfu' quarterly Masons' meetin's that I blame for't. They happen aboot twice a week, an' he usually comes hame frae them in sic a state that he's no' fit to claw his ain elbow. It keeps me scrimpit enough in pocket," she added, "for though I industriously hing up his breeks by the fit o' the legs every nicht, there's no' a solitary sixpence left to drap oot o' his clean-pickit pouches. I micht as weel look for money in the ash-bakey."

"An' the quarterly Masons' meetings happen twice a week, ye say?"

"On the Wednesdays an' the Setterdays, as regular as the clock."

"*Imphn!* jist so! Weel, when I tak' a man, I'll first see that he's no a merry Mason, onyway, whatever else he may turn oot to be, tak' my word for't."

"What! are ye takin' that way at last, Miss Jean?" naively put in Peggy, whose tongue had already become somewhat clappity with the cupful of Miss Jean's doctored milk. "Tell me, wha's the intended man?"

"Oh, it's no' jist settled yet, ye ken," answered the stout lodging-wife, "though I may as weel confess't, I'm fair pestered wi' suitors the noo."

"Yin o' the lodgers, Miss Jean?"

"Na, catch me! They see me owre often for a true, lastin' loveship. Familiarity breeds dislike, ye ken, while distance lends enchantment to the view. I prefer to transact my coortin' bisness wi' a guid braid deal table atween me an' my admirer, baith figuratively and practically."

"Wha, then, is he?"

"Wheesht! haud yer tongue. Gi'e me the saft side o' yer ear." (Here Miss Jean confidingly whispered a name into Peggy's itching ear, which was extended towards her hostess for that purpose.)

"Gae wa' wi' ye! ye dinna surely mean it?" was Peggy's reply to the information communicated. "What! Tippenny Tam?"

"The vera man," admitted the stout lodging-wife.

"No?"

"As sure's ye're there."

"Dae ye ken his occupation, Miss Jean?"

"Fine that; he ca's himsel' a commercial traveller."

"An' so he is—*for specks!*" acceded Peggy, the latter portion of her involuntary reply being enunciated in a discreet undertone.

"An' has Tam really pappit the question, Miss Jean?"

"Weel, in a sense he has," answered the stout lodging-wife. "He's been here on three separate occasions, nae less, an' he aye times himsel' to visit me when my twa men lodgers are likely to be out, so as he'll catch me bird-alane, ye ken. They're worth watchin', the men. I ken that much, san'-blin' as I am on the amenities o' married life in general."

"He's visited ye haill three times, ye say, Miss Jean?"

"It's as sure as ye're sittin' there. An' what's mair, every time he has visited me he has made a distinct advance in his coortship."

"Ay?"

"Yes; it's as sure as ye're sittin' there. The first ca' he made he was content to sit on a chair at the faurest awa' corner o' the kitchen, daein' little but twirlin' his bannet in his twa hands an' glow'rin' up at the whitened ceilin' or into the fire. The second nicht he looked in on me, he drew owre to the table quite familiar-like, an' ackwally leaned owre't in my direction, as if he wad fain come nearer me."

"Ay?"

"Yes; an' on the third visit he telt me aff-han' to tak' that awkward table oot o' the gaet that stood atween us, as he fair hated the sicht o't."

"Ay?"

"Yes; it's as sure as ye're sittin' there. Weel, I set the table to the yae side a bit, jist to please him, ye ken; an' drawin' his chair inowre a bit, he cuist me sic a meltin', pathetic, treacley look, an' syne said, 'Jeanie, my dear, could ye fancy a hot tattie?' Noo, if that's no' directly pappin' the question," added the stout lodging-wife, "I'll plead guilty to kennin' precious little aboot the plain meanin' o' love-signs an' languages."

"An' did he pu' a hot tattie oot o' his pooch, then?" quite sincerely asked Peggy.

"Oh, nò; not at all, my dear woman. Ye see, the language was kind o' feegurative. The hot tattie was understood, ye ken," cleverly explained Miss Jean.

"Ay, jist that," said Peggy. "Tippenny Tam's the feegurative hot tattie referred to. An' pray, Miss Jean, when is't comin' aff?"

"Och, haud yer tongue! Spare my feelin's, Peggy, if *you* please. The like o' this disna happen every day in a woman's life, though I've had my chances. Here, tak' anither cupfu' o' mulk, an' kindly spare my feelin's on this sacred occasion, if *you* please."

"But what if he rues an' draws back?" put in Peggy;

"for Tippenny Tam, they say's, a licht-wutted, leerie-heided sort o' chap."

"What! draw back after carryin' me on sae faur! Let him try't. See ye, Peggy, he maun either pit the ring on my third finger there, or flee the country. There's only twa ways oot o't for Tam—the minister's manse or Ameriky."

"'Od, what am I thinkin' o', staunin' here haverin' awa' an' the kail-pat no on the fire yet," suddenly exclaimed Peggy. "I maun hurry awa' across, for if oor man catches me here, wi' the smell o' yer bottled mulk aboot me, there'll be a bonnie how-d'ye-do, I can tell ye."

"Here, pit that peppermint in yer mouth, my dear woman," said the stout lodging-wife, "it'll jist crack the wind on yer stomach like a stane gaun' through window gless."

"Ta-ta the noo, then, expectin' an invitation when it comes aff," was Peggy's parting salutation.

"Oh, spare my delicate feelin's, Peggy, if *you* please. Tam's comin' here the morn's nicht, an's bringin' me a present o' a tortie-shell cat, an' if that's no' furnishin' a hoose by instalments, I confess I ken but little o' the sign language o' love an' coortship. Ta-ta! I'll be owre an' let ye ken what's what in a day or twa. Ta-ta!"

Like a true woman, Peggy duly informed her husband that same night of the great secret which Jean Tamson had so confidentially communicated to her, not forgetting to mention the present of a tortoiseshell cat which Tippenny Tam had promised to make Jean on the following night, as a supposed initial part of the house furnishing, and as a pledge of the depth and sincerity of his love.

Now, Peggy's husband, who was a bit of a wag, laughed aloud on hearing of this, down to the length of his shoe leather.

So far, so good.

About eight o'clock that same evening, who should step in to Peggy's presence but Tippenny Tam himself, the

veritable "speck" hawking commercial traveller of Jean Tamson's warm love-hopes and virgin affections.

"There's a snelly nicht for ye ootside doors," was Tam's commonplace salutation as he dropped mechanically into a chair.

"Ay, there's a bit nip o' frost in the air, I feel," answered Peggy's husband, who was comfortably blawin' awa' at a well-filled pipe. "Onything new the nicht, Tam?"

"I hear naething extr'ornary," Tam quietly answered.

"Are ye no' thinkin' o' takin' a second wife yet, Tam?" asked Peggy, winking slyly to her worthy guidman.

"Hoots! sic a thing's no' in my sober auld heid. I've had enough o' the ticklish jauds, I'm thinkin'."

"What, Tammas! no even thinkin' o't?" put in Peggy's husband.

"No, no, I assure ye."

A short confusing silence supervened, which was almost momentarily broken by Tippenny Tam dashing frantically into the subject that lay immediately on his mind.

"Man, that's a fine bit cat ye've gotten—a rale bonnilie-markit tortie-shell cat ye've gotten haud o', I see."

Geordie looked across his spectacles to Peggy, who broke a piece of coal in the fire and said nothing. The remark was so suggestive that even young Geordie, the budding genius of the family, cocked his two ears at it and smiled, but very guardedly.

"Ay, it's a bit bonnie cat, I maun alloo," responded Peggy's husband, with a faint smile.

"Man, d'ye ken," added Tam, "I've tooken a rale fancy for a bit nice young cat, jist to warm my desolate fire-en', an' to quaten doun the cheepin' o' the mice at nicht."

"Man, Tam, that's surely a fell strange notion that's tooken yer heid, eh!"

"E-e-eh, a most wonderfu' singular notion, I freely admit," rejoined the slightly flustered spectacle man.

"Can ye no' account for't ava, Tammas?" slyly put in Peggy.

"Nae mair than ye could yersel'. It's jist a bit innocent whim o' the fancy, ye ken—jist a bit innocent whim o' the rovin' fancy—I opine."

"If Peggy's willin', ye're welcome to't, Tam, twice owre."

"Man, I'd fair jump at the offer o't," exclaimed the spectacle man, rolling his cap round and round in his hands till it was like anything except a head cover for a modern Scotch Christian.

"Tak' it awa' wi' ye," said Peggy. "Ye're welcome to't, I'm sure."

"The morn's nicht I'll ca' roun' for't wi' a carpet-bag," delightedly answered Tam, and hurriedly jumping to his two feet, he made an instant move for the door, without remembering to leave a word of thanks, or even to express a formal "guid-nicht" to the worthy pair.

Now, Peggy's husband happened to have an apothecary on the list of his acquaintances, from whom he borrowed next day a packet of luminous phosphorus, which he secretly rubbed into the fur of the tortoise-shell cat that night, till it all but shone with light. In the dark it burned with blue flame like an evil spirit evoked from the pit of nether darkness.

"It's all done in the way of a scientific joke," Peggy's husband gleefully chuckled to himself on letting the powerfully phosphorised cat run free, which immediately made for below the kitchen bed.

About nine o'clock next night round came Tippenny Tam for the promised cat, carrying a capacious old-fashioned carpet-bag in his hand.

Profuse of thanks this time, off set Tippenny Tam for Jean Tamson's domicile, with the tortie-shell cat fuffin' an' sprauchlin' inside the carpet-bag.

The spectacle-man was in distinct luck. Jean's lodgers

were fortunately once more abroad for the evening, and Jean herself was seated by the cheery kitchen fire, awaiting his expected visit, no doubt.

"I've brocht ye the present o' a bonnie bit tortie-shell cat, as I promised I wad," said Tam, and he at once proceeded to open the capacious carpet-bag.

Flop! open flew the bag, and *spring!* out flashed the cat like a white streak of lightning, and disappeared the next moment below the kitchen bed.

"It feels strange a wee in its new quarters," remarked Tam apologetically, as he marked its startlingly sudden disappearance.

"Raither," drawled out the stout lodging-wife, "an' frae what I momentarily saw o't it seems to ha'e a kind o' raised, flee-aboot, wull-cat look. Its fur, for yae thing, looks as if it had been badly rubbit the wrang way."

"I can guarantee the animal. It's a rale sweet, nice, darlin' cat, Miss Jean, an' it'll mak' a nice, warm, usefu' ornament to oor fireside," put in the spectacle-man.

"*Oor* fireside! that settles't," Jean muttered to herself. "Yes, Tammas, it's jist a perfect beauty o' a cat."

And so in this off-hand way Tippenny Tam's curious betrothal gift was effusively accepted by Jean Tamson, and the affair settled forthwith.

Tam was in fine tune, and sat till the re-appearance of Jean's twa lodgers that nicht, who returned home from a protracted visit to a local dram-shop between the rather late hours of eleven and twelve.

The cat, during the interval, had never once re-appeared from under the cover of the bed.

Now, Jean's two men lodgers were both originals in their way.

Paddy Clinker was the one, and he was a day labourer in a Clyde boat-yard; Johnny Piper was the other, and he was a brisk old Waterloo pensioner.

It was a Friday night this all happened on, and as Johnny's quarterly pension had fallen due that day, the pair had been taking a free-and-easy "rise" out of themselves in the local dram-shops all the afternoon.

Their last escapade had been a visit to a small tripe shop and eating-house, where Paddy, in spite of Church, Pope, and Friday night, had gone in freely for beef, both cold and hot, in the form of tripe, mutton pies, and whatever else came in uppermost at Johnny Piper's martial call.

Therefore when the happy pair reached their lodgings that night they were in a capital condition for tumbling into bed without prayers, and with the sure prospect of having a graphic nightmare time of it till dawn next day.

Jean was already in bed when her two merry lodgers arrived, dreaming with her eyes open, no doubt, of future married felicities with the romantic-minded traveller for "specks."

She distinctly heard her lodgers' unsteady footsteps, heard their voices, heard bottle and glass clink several times before they turned into bed for the night, and then all fell very quiet—almost ominously quiet and still.

Meantime, the tortoise shell cat which Tippenny Tam had brought her as a present that night, finding all quiet in the house, seemed to become possessed with a very natural desire to explore the extent and character of its new quarters.

Cautiously it popped its head from below the bit of coloured chintz cloth which curtained the space below the bed, and then stepped very gingerly across the floor towards the hearth-stone.

In the dark of the room the phosphorus with which its soft fur had been so freely rubbed now shone out with startling luminosity, giving it a most weird, ghostly, and glittering outline.

Jean saw it, and shook with a nervous fear in every

limb. She breathed hard with excitement. The cat turned, stared at her, and—moved in her direction!

A moment after a yell of horror rang throughout the house, consequent on which the strangely illuminated cat fled for shelter into the lodgers' room adjoining.

"What's that, Paddy?" cried the old Waterloo pensioner, springing from the bed.

"A summons from purgatory, bedad!" answered Paddy Clinker, as he sprang up in bed and watched the ghostly apparition flying hither and thither about the room in bewilderment and fright, like a streak of detached lightning. "Och, dear, Jahnny Piper! an' this is what comes of eating Pratestant baif on a Friday! Bad luck to the pension-money that paid for the hot tripe! Niver, niver, niver more will I eat baif on a Friday, if I should die in a ditch for the want of it. Och, och! luk at that. It's the divil sure, in the guise of a mad cat. *Ave Maria,* save me! Och, here it comes again!"

This said, poor Paddy quickly crossed himself several times and cleverly dived from sight under the bed-clothes, where he lay for some minutes panting with excitement and fear.

Not so Johnny Piper, however. The bold spirit of Waterloo still burned heroically in his breast, much as the passage of years had run it into ash. Taken with a proper martial spirit, the old Waterloo pensioner at once sprang to his feet, and seizing a long-handled hearth-brush, he dropped mechanically on one knee, bare as it was, and levelling his defensive weapon, stood gallantly at the "receive cavalry" position; and calmly awaited the attack of the unknown enemy in his nightshirt!

The cat, thus confronted and excited, seemed to lose control of itself, and continued flying round the room, over table and chairs, with the most extraordinary velocity and spirit.

Roused to action by the scrimmage in the room, the stout

lodging-wife also got up and took the floor in her night-dress and her petticoat, and armed with what Paddy Clinker called the kitchen "provoker," she entered in on the scene of hostilities.

The sight that met her eyes was truly laughable, had it been only less seriously tragical, in the view of those immediately concerned.

Poor Paddy was on his knees in the bed, and in prayer; the maddened cat was flying round the room like forked lightning; while the old Waterloo hero was wheeling round and changing his armed front every moment, so as to face and meet the impending onset of the excited foe.

"Eh, me!" cried the confounded lodging-wife, "what ava sort o' unearthly animal has that awfu' Tippenny Tam brocht into my hoose this nicht, that looks like neither dowg, cat, nor cuddy?"

"Bugle the garrison! call out the 5th Company, and parade the troops!" shouted out the old Waterloo pensioner.

"Och! och! it's a hot summons from purgatory, I tell yez," again blurted out Paddy Clinker. "Bad luck to wicked ould Jahnny Piper's pension-money, an' Pratestant baif on a Friday!"

"Mercy me! every gless ornament in the room 'ill be smashed to pieces afore my vera e'en," exclaimed the distracted lodging-wife, making a series of murderous passes at the cat with the kitchen poker, from the fur of which, electrified as the hunted animal was with excitement, streaks of phosphorescent light were flying about the room in all directions.

Thus put to, the excited animal ultimately ended the row by springing clean through the papered opening of a broken pane of glass in the room window, and so escaped into the back court.

The stout lodging-wife was fearfully angry at the trick

Tippenny Tam had played on her, which she believed had been wilfully done. If she could only get her tongue round him for five minutes, she would make him hear her on the deafest side of his head. Her opportunity came the very next night, in the shape of a visit from her ardent admirer, the speck-hawking commercial.

"May I cross yer bonnie fluir the nicht, Miss Jean?" said the speck-hawker, in his blandest tones.

"Ye may. I'm particularly wantin' to see ye, an' to speak wi' ye."

Off came Tam's bonnet and down he clinkit on the nearest chair, a gracious smile glazing his flabby countenance from ear to ear.

"You want to—to—to speak wi' me, my dear Miss Jean?" he ventured to say, noticing from her stiff manner and the severe countenance she kept that something had surely gone wrong.

"Most particularly I do. In the name o'—o'—o' naitural history, sir, what sort o' animal was yon ye left here last nicht?"

"It was simply a cat—a bit hamely tortie-shell cat," sincerely answered the speck-hawker, raising his eyes to his questioner in astonishment.

"A cat, ca' ye't? It was a limp o' the vera deil, naething short o't, an' flew but an' ben the hoose for twa stricken hours in the middle o' the nicht like a ball o' lowin' brimstane, as me an' my twa men lodgers can this day powerfully testify. Was't a ghaist, a lowin' limp o' auld Clootie, or what? Speak! answer me, sir, whaur ye sit!"

"It's a pair o' guid reliable specks some o' the three o' ye are sair needin' if ye're seein' sae bad as a' that, the which I can supply cheap," the astonished spectacle man blurted out, not knowing exactly what to think of the lodging-wife's strange statement. "Had your twa worthy lodgers a smell o' the bottle last nicht, Miss Jean, may I ask?"

"They had, I'm sorry to say."

"An' they distinctly saw this lowin' brimstane ghost!"

"Owre plainly for their ain peace o' mind."

"An' did ye ackwally see't tae, Miss Jean?"

"Baith saw't and smelt the brimstane feuch o't."

"Imph! and ye were perfectly sober, Miss Jean?"

"Perfectly sober, sir."

"That stowp 'll no carry watter across the park. I can draw an inference. *The marriage is aff!*"

"What! efter carryin' on an innocent lassie sae faur? Hang ye for a deceivin' auld rascal! That's the fifth time I've been lifted up in a man's airms an' syne let fa' doon wi' a clyte. Deil tak' me if I dinna lash ye, back an' face, wi' a wat dish-cloot!"

But the spectacle man was too quick for her. Taking in the desperate situation at a glance, he cleared both the house and the lobby leading thereto in three splendid kangaroo leaps, disappearing down the close with the viewless celerity of a sixpenny telegram.

Jean Tamson was thus once more left alone, not "blooming," like the last rose of summer, however, but weeping with fair vexation and disappointment.

"The marriage is aff, sure enough, an' so is Tippenny Tam, the unconscionable rascal! That's the fifth time I've been led awa' by the men, I'm sae guileless an' sae trustin' at the heart. I wish I had only pu'd the hale five o' my lovers up for breach o' promise. I micht ha'e bocht a property wi' the total damages. My heart has been broken hale five times, an' if it hadna been made o' rale first-rate Scotch cahoochie I wad ha'e been cauld in my grave lang ere this. Here I am, however, an unpu'd an' neglected floo'r in a wildnerness o' thorns an' thistles. *I wonder wha'll gi'e me my sixth offer?*"

THE AMATEUR PHRENOLOGIST.

WATTY TREDDLES, a stocking-weaver in Camlachie, and his wife Peggy, had a highly promising son, who had been born with a soul far above weaver's dressing. He was cut out for a distinguished career, the fond parents believed, as he had broken more windows, "plunk't" the school oftener, drowned more dogs, and killed more cats than any other boy in the district.

He was, in fact, a real born genius, who only needed opportunity to distinguish himself, and whose great natural talents required and deserved adequate expansion at the College classes.

"Pit him to the College," urged Peggy, "an' mak' him either a minister or a doctor, for the clever callant's fit for either, or baith o' them. He has an e'e like a lichted candle, an' as for his broo, it's as braid's a pavement, an's a fair kirk-steeple for heicht."

"Canny a wee, wife; ca' canny there," cautiously put in the old weaver. 'We maun mak' oor way sure an' sicker, stap by stap, an' look weel afore we lowp the dyke, no' kennin' what's beyond it. I've ken't a chiel hurriedly jump a dyke an' land up to the hochs in a dib on the ither side."

"An' what then?" sharply put in Peggy? "Is the laddie to be nae better than a puir creeshie weaver, like——"

"Like wha, or what, Peggy?"

"Weel, then, like his faither, if I maun say't."

"Canny there, wife! ca' canny wi' yer tongue!"

"Tak' yer ain way owre the dyke, then, whatever that may turn oot to be," snapped Peggy.

"Which is this: I'll ca' in lang-leggit Haffy Taffy, the stickit minister. He's the wonder o' the district for knowledge, an' he's reckoned the most desperately learned man in the hale o' Camlachie, includin' baith weavers an'

ministers, half daft as some think him. It's said his neck's twisted wi' pure knowledge. Onyway, he's reckoned a grand hand at the bump-readin', an' can read heids, I'm telt, jist like a minister ca'in' awa' through an afternoon sermon on the Twal Apostles. For a gill, Haffy 'ill tell us what's in the laddie's heid, an what's no' in't, an' syne we can decide on a suitable profession for him—in the line o' Haffy's learned suggestions, of course."

"Eh, me! that's a rale grand idea," agreed Peggy. "I hope an' trust Haffy 'ill find the money-bump big in the laddie's heid. It wad ding every ither bump to perfect sticks, an' wad prove vera usefu' in gaun' to the market, I'm sure. But I'm fear't for't, for the money-bump's no' in oor family."

"Hang the money-bump!" retorted Watty, "what mortal man could save money in this hoose, wi' every blessed sixpence carefully shaken oot o' his twa breeks' pouches nicht after nicht, as regularly as the mune rises? Woman, ha'e ye no a single particle o' soul inside yer checkit short-goon whatever? Try an' pit a handfu' o' sound philosophy in yer purse, woman, an' let the coppers gang for a time."

"A' richt, my fine man! I'll pit aside the meal-dish for a time, also, jist to try ye, an' syne mix yer parritch the morn's mornin' wi' some plain cauld watter an' a handfu' or twa o' nice pure philosophy. If ye ha'ena the wind strong on the stomach efter that it'll no' be for want o' an ample vawcancy, I'm thinkin'."

Later on the same day it was arranged that Haffy Taffy, the lang-leggit phrenological chap, should come round to the house that evening on special invitation, and read for them their talented son's wonderful and highly-promising head.

Conformably to this arrangement, and well knowing Haffy's predominant tastes, a half-mutchkin of Duncan Tod's best Glenlivet was duly brocht in and set carefully

by in the cupboard. And the dram being once in the house, the lang-leggit, dry-nebbit phrenological chap, as if guided by a keen instinct, was not long behind it.

In fine feather, Haffy presently turned up, with a great roll of scientific manuscript under his arm, a look of light and leading in his grand eyes, a dirty-white "choker" round his thin, wry neck, politeness and eloquence on his facile tongue, and with his very scant hair most carefully parted in the middle. In fact, it was quite effusively obvious that the scientific Haffy, daft or no' daft, clearly considered himself quite the professional "toff" that evening, and was making a highly successful effort to look the distinguished professional genius on this very special occasion.

But the chief feature of the philosophic Haffy's personal get-up was certainly centred in his two legs, which were encased in a pair of all but skin-tight "strides," grey in colour, and sprung widely at the feet, with a white stripe running longitudinally up and down their entire length, and which, taken in connection with his soiled white "choker," constituted him a fairly-balanced compromise between a minister in reduced circumstances and a journeyman tailor on the spree. His legs in themselves were also of that type best described by the euphonious term of "pipe stapples." They were obviously intended by nature for jumping, or perhaps more strictly for running purposes. Stickit minister or no' stickit minister, Haffy, in point of fact, could jump like a lively flea when half on, which was oftener than otherwise; and as for the matter of running, there was no man in all Camlachie that could run faster or farther *into debt* than he could, giving him only his head for it. He was a bit of a practical juggler, too, Haffy having devoted a portion of his effervescing genius for occult science and mystery to the trick of sleight-of-hand legerdemain. In this very fine state of "get-up," he grandiloquently stepped

into the stocking-weaver's homely little parlour that evening, full of the important business under arrangement.

"Good evening, friends. Hope I see you all blooming?" was the philosophic Haffy's laconic greeting.

"Like tatties in July," replied Watty, getting to his feet, and deferentially pushing a chair towards his visitor. "I neednа ask ye hoo ye're haudin' yersel'," he naively added, "for I see ye're fair shinin'—frae the legs up."

The philosophic Haffy smiled benevolently, and subsided very gingerly into the proffered chair.

Taking off his jaunty hat, which had the greyish metal gloss of a newly blackleaded grate, he revealed to the eyes of the homely domestic pair a forehead which shone and rose into the sublime altitude and polish of a metal dish-cover. Haffy next spread out on the table before their wondering eyes a phrenological chart illustrative of the interesting science of heads.

The chart showed a hairless female head, all spaced into little squares, and marked off and classified according to the teachings of phrenology, in the ordinary way.

"There it is—science beautifully reduced to order and instructive detail at a single comprehensive glance," loftily said Haffy, with a grandiloquent wave of the hand.

"Eh, me?" exclaimed Peggy, lifting both hands in astonishment; "whaur did ye get that woman's shaved heid? She's no' three weeks oot o' the Infirmary wi' the fever, I'm fearin'."

Watty, equally amazed, very carefully cleaned and adjusted his specks, and then solemnly surveyed the interesting chart.

"Wonderful, most wonderful!" he said, as his eyes wandered over the figured chart. "But what," he asked, "is the meaning o' a' thir wee squares, sae carefully marked aff, named, an' numbered, jist like sae mony drapers' trade tickets?"

"Let me briefly explain," replied the romantic Haffy.

"Phrenologists, you see, have divided off the human head into some thirty-six different compartments, in every one of which a passion, a perception, or a principle is located."

"Eh, me!" once more broke in Peggy, "whaever heard the ekwal o' that? Jist for a' the world like a kist o' drawers wi' a' the faimily Sunday claes pit bye in't."

"To a hair, madam—to a very fine hair," acceded the facile Haffy. "Now, observe," he quickly added, "these passions and principles are active and passive, according to size and cultivation. Exercise of any organ of the human head gives activity to that organ; indolence, or the neglect of it, gives passivity. In fact, these separate organs of the human head can be played on just like so many fiddles."

"What!" suddenly broke in old Watty, "d'ye mean to tell me that there's organs and fiddles in men's heids? Whew! that cock 'll no' fecht, nick its kaim as ye will. A—a—a greater lee than that never was wabbit in auld Camlachie."

"Do not misunderstand me, pray. Merely the expressive language of figure, I assure you—merely and solely the expressive language of figure. Well, to resume: a person who is largely developed here (pointing to Benevolence) will be a good man, probably a public philanthropist, or a Gospel preacher."

"That's oor young son," once more broke in Peggy. "He has a lump fair on the roof o' his heid as big as a juck's egg."

"Oh, then, my dear madam, just bring him in at once," said the romantic and highly facile Haffy. "I can illustrate my subject still better from the living human head, I daresay."

"An' jist bring ben the dram also, when ye're at it," added Watty. "A body wad need something to haud their wits firm thegither under sic a scoutherin' lash o' knowledge. The wab-weavin's an intricate job, some think; but, by my faith, the phrenology trade's far intricater.

The two subjects thus in immediate request were soon in the little room, to the more liquid and potent of which Haffy did instant and ample justice, putting over his allowance with a hearty smack.

"And now to business," he said, smiling blandly at the young hopeful standing so passively before him. "Your head, sir,—there! Ah! capital—grand—famous," he went on, exhausting all his available stock of high-sounding adjectives. "This *is* a head, and no mistake!"

"Didna I tell ye the laddie was made for the pulpit?" triumphantly thrust in Peggy.

"Not exactly the pulpit, my dear woman," mildly rejoined the highly adaptable Haffy. "Pulpit gown and cassock are not exactly for your son. He's of the Christopher Columbus type, I find."

"But what, in auld Harry's name, is the yiss o' anither Christopher Columbus when America's been already discovered twa hunder years since?" put in the old weaver. "Graip his heid again, Haffy, an' try an' fetch him oot as a precentor, a doctor, or, to please oor wife there, a minister o' the Gospel."

"Couldn't, my dear sir, if you was to give me a whole Atlas of gold. The laws of Nature are unalterable. This young man is a born Christopher Columbus, I tell ye, and as such he must sink or swim."

"Noo, when I come to think on't," put in Peggy, "when he was jist a wee schule-laddie, no' that heicht, he was fair mad for paper boats, oor wee bairn. A shoo'er o' rain couldna fa' but he was oot sailin' his paper ships in the gutters."

"That's just it," naively added Haffy, "the highest development in this young man's head, I find, is an organ recently discovered by myself, and called in Latin *Aquabus purabus marinabus*, and which means in English *pure sea water*."

"What!" exclaimed the old weaver, "d'ye mean to threep doun my throat that the laddie's got the watter in the heid?"

"His head's full of water, I assure you, figuratively speaking," answered Haffy, with a complacent smile, which gradually broadened out so ineffably as almost to connect the two corners of his mouth with his rather long and flabby ears.

"Weel, I've seen stooky feegurs in my time," said Watty, "but as for your feegurs o' speech, I ken but little o' them. Hoosomever, that there is either sea, river, or pump watter in the laddie's heid, swall't at the croon as it looks, is what I'll no thole said o' him, phrenology here or phrenology yonder."

"*Aquabus purabus marinabus*," smilingly maintained the facile Haffy," "that's the grand feature of this promising young man's finely-gifted, Columbus-like peak-of-Teneriffe, marine head."

"Weel," said the old weaver, giving up the argued point, "I've heard o' mulk in a cocoa-nut, but hang me if ever I heard tell o' sea-watter in the human heid. It beats cock-fechtin'."

"Man, ye're awful slow in the uptak'," again broke in Peggy. "D'ye no' perceive that that's maybe whaur a' the saut tears come frae when a body's broken wi' sorrow an' greetin'!"

"Capital, my dear madam—capital!" exclaimed the facile Haffy, helping himself to a fresh tumbler.

"Lord, so it is! I never saw't till this moment. There's a reason for a' things, if we could only win at the bottom o' them, I must admit."

"Believe me, *aquabus purabus marinabus* is the young man's strong bit," added Haffy. "Take my advice and send him off to sea at once. He's an embryotic Columbus. Give him plenty of water and he'll swim, proudly swim, onwards and upwards to immortal glory."

The old weaver did not exactly see how any one could very well *swim upwards* to glory. However, he swallowed the ad-

jective along with a fresh glass, and made no comment thereanent, concluding in his own canny mind, very probably, that it was another of Haffy's bamboozling figures of speech.

After this, conversation flowed into general channels, and on Peggy graciously praising Haffy for his wonderful cleverness, he offered to further illustrate his talents by showing them a clever trick in sleight-of-hand legerdemain if they would only permit him.

"Have you half-a-sovereign—just for one moment?" he smartly inquired.

"There's no' sic an article in the hoose, I'm sorry to say. They're fell scarce aboot the district the noo," truthfully answered Watty.

"A half-crown will do, then," said Haffy, extending his open hand for the needed coin.

The half-crown was ultimately produced by Peggy from the bottom of an old china cup, placed handily in the corner of a shelf.

"Now observe," said Haffy, "this is what is designated the 'disappearing trick.' In other words, the half-crown goes; I remain."

Saying this much, Haffy introduced the half-crown to his mouth, and pronouncing the word "Change," the coin instantly fled therefrom, finding a lodgment in his coat-sleeve.

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the astonished Peggy.

"Try't again," said Watty, re-adjusting his specks. "It's a trick, I ken, if yin could only smartly follow't up."

The trick was successfully repeated, with clever movement of hand and mouth.

The old weaver again looked blank astonishment, having failed to follow it.

"Observe, I'll give you one chance once more," said the facile Haffy, putting the coin in his mouth for the third time. "Now—go!"

But what's the matter with Haffy? He wriggles in his

chair, his eyes turn round, he draws in a big sigh. The half-crown is apparently swallowed by mistake this time!

Peggy, greatly alarmed, offers to run for the local apothecary, while Watty rises hurriedly from his chair for the purpose of "bungin'" the unfortunate Haffy on the back to force up the half-swallowed coin.

"No use—no need," calmly says Haffy, recovering breath and speech with quite surprising alacrity. "It's gone—it's over—it's swallowed—it's lost, irretrievably lost, I tell you. And that's the end of it—a narrow escape for me!"

So said the cunning Haffy, the swallowed half-crown being cleverly secreted up his sleeve all the time, as before.

"Now I'll retire, I think," he said, getting smartly to his feet, putting at the same moment the phrenological chart under his arm. "Remember what I told you. Your son is a local Columbus, *minus* a discovered America. Given the water, he'll swim. Good-night, friends, good-night."

"Na, na, my fine chiel! that cock 'ill no' fecht," quickly thrust in the old weaver. "Sit ye doun a bit till Peggy prepares ye an emetic o' saut an' het watter to gar ye bock up the swallowed half-croon. Ye're no' gaun' to dae the disappeerin' trick wi' my half-croon sae easily as a' that. Peggy, twa pints o' het watter an' a handfu' o' saut, as fast's ye can."

"Impossible, my dear sir,—impossible! I appeal to your sense, to your humanity, not to say to the pathology of the accident," expostulated Haffy, clapping on his hat.

"Pathology here or pathology yonder," replied Watty, "in twa minutes doon yer throat gangs the saut an' watter, an' up comes the half-croon, if ye dinna first produce that same swallowed coin, which I verily believe is hidden up yer sleeve this blessed minute."

"Gone, irretrievably gone!" replied Haffy, pointing pathetically to his throat.

"That'll no' dae. It could never win owre the natural twist in yer neck, Haffy."

"It's gone—gone—gone! I tell you, and I'm going too. Remember what I've told you about the young man. The salt water is for his head, clearly, but would be quite out of place in my stomach. He's a local Columbus, I tell you, *minus* America. *Aquabus purabus marinabus*, that's his mental figure-head. Kindly let me pass, will you?"

"No, hang me if I dae. Confound yer *aquabus purabus marinabus.* Deliver up that hidden half-croon, or I'll break yer backabus with a blowabus of this stickabus. Remember you thatabus!"

This said, Geordie, full of just wrath, made to put his comical threat into operation, seeing which, the romantic and highly learned Haffy made a frantic spring in the direction of the door and successfully cleared the premises in three magnificent kangaroo leaps.

"Confound the lang-leggit thief!" exclaimed Watty; "he's fairly aff wi' that half-croonabus!"

"Never mind; oor son's to be a Columbus, he says, an' that's surely worth mair than the half-croon in itsel'," said Peggy, in a mollifying tone of voice.

"Columbus be blowed! I'm only fell vex't I didna get the chance to break his confoonded scientific back wi' the heavy end o' this auld stickabus. Hoosomever, if oor laddie maun gang to the sea to push his way forrit in the world, thank Heaven, we ha'e twa canals at hand, in either o' which a word wi' canal Tam, the manager o' the Port-Dundas canal, wad get him articled an' indentured for the service, if only properly wetted wi' a frien'ly dram."

And so, in the line of Haffy Taffy's phrenological prophecy the youth was soon after sent to the "sea" in a Port-Dundas canal boat, where he rose to eminence in his profession, as the responsible Captain of a steam-scow, plying regularly between Port-Dundas and the foreign ports of Bowling, Kirkintilloch, and the Monkland!

PETER PATERSON, THE POET.

THAT jaunty and vivacious genius of the public platform, Professor Blackie, is credited with having estimated the living poets of Scotland as numbering several thousands. The estimate is greatly under the truth. The poets of Scotland at the present time are to be rated by tens of thousands, if not, indeed, hundreds of thousands.

Why this should be so is not explainable on ordinary lines. The Scotch are not at all an emotional people—their climate is not particularly poetical in its aspects—the mass of the people are sensible rather than frivolous—and lastly, the cast of the national head is after the shape and character of a well-fired brick, rather than approximating to anything like a copy of the ideal Shakesperian dome of thought.

But then, of course, Scotland has unequalled piles of lofty and rugged hills, glens, burns, lochs, rills, and rivers; and in these inspiring attributes of physical beauty the national lyre has all along been heartily twanged. Moreover, the Scotch have had a history at once the most romantic and manly in the world. And there again, heard or unheard, the native poets of the rural townships and country clachans have all along proved themselves to be, in the matter of verse-making at least, "the chaps that can't keep still."

Peter Paterson, a lowly-born, but romantic minded poet, had been a much-married man in his day. He had been three times a widower, no less, and was now a nightly inmate of a twopenny lodging-house, having no immediate prospect of a fourth wife. His first wife had lost her reason trying to appreciate his "poetry." His second wife lost her life trying to live off it. His third wife had lost an e'e looking for money in his empty pockets, and on discovering a

"fowrpenny bit" one night, the unexpected shock had upset her reason and fairly killed her.

A single incident in this connection will show up Pate's innocent, guileless, poetic ways, not less than his lofty estimate of married bliss:—

Being out into the country one summer day admiring nature, he found a half-mutchkin bottle of spirits lying on a turf dyke.

He smelt it—whisky! All right! still there was a certain risk. It might be drugged—poisoned—or anything you like.

Away home Pate goes, in a big hurry, the bottle of whisky in his pocket. The face of Nature, fair as it was in his poetic eyes, had no manner of charm equal to that of whisky!

Arriving at home, Pate said nothing, but filled out a glass, and bade his third wife drink. She drank it right off. He waited. No evil effects resulted. *She got no more of it.* Pate went for the rest of it like a soldier. A wife is sometimes a useful plague, after all, if one only knew, like Pate, how to utilise them.

Pate's history, as embodied in his poetical experiences, is worth relating on account not only of its many racy passages, but also for the wholesome lecture it reads to those whom it closely concerns—the minor poets of Scotland. As one of its outstanding episodes, we shall here give a chapter on Pate's experiences as a poet publishing his first, and, as it proved in Pate's case, his last volume of verse; for Pate, poor man, like the typical washer wife, spent a lot of time over his *lines*, and found life full of nothing better than hard *rubs*.

Pate was one of the old-fashioned lum-cheek shaemakers, now all but obsolete, who did their trysted work and repair jobs mostly at their own kitchen fire-end.

Pate, however, had a soul above mere unpoetic shoe-

leather, and very early discovered a facile talent for glueing rhymes together, a practice which would have proved remunerative enough, no doubt, if the produce of the Muse could have been carried for sale to the market like cow heels, sheep-heids, live poultry, and other marketable commodities.

Pay or no pay, however, Pate was bound to regularly rhyme or break out in a sort of skin disorder analogous in appearance to the measles.

In the pursuance of this inborn habit he had rhymed to such purpose, in the matter of quantity at least, that a volume became in time a necessity of the hour and the occasion. A volume was, therefore, decided on. And why not, Pate reasoned with himself, his third wife, and his friends? Other working shoemakers had published volumes, and had in consequence become famous. Why not he? That's what Pate always wanted to know, or rather *not* to know. For a volume he was bent on producing, in the face of all odds, including his third wife—which latter obstacle heavily tipped the balance over all the rest.

Ah, yes, that was where the shoe pinched sorest. What then? Did Pate's third spoûse discourage and underestimate his romantic genius? Well, perhaps she did—perhaps she did!

Pate never actually said so, but when asked if his wife fully appreciated his lofty poetic genius, he was in the habit of answering the pointed question by pushing the one side of his nose nearly flat down with his right forefinger on the opposite side of his face, and knowingly winking with his left eye.

However, Pate's unromantic spouse was in some effectual way bought over for the grand occasion, and the idea of a volume was proceeded with apace.

Having got a prospectus printed, Pate's next part of the business was to get a sufficient number of subscribers' names adhibited. And that proved the first rock of despair ahead

of Pate's onward and upward path; for Pate, notwithstanding his poetic elevation of soul, was in numerous instances most cruelly sat upon. Yes, sat upon. He was deliberately and most unfeelingly sat upon, and his projected volume was all but crushed in its beautiful and interesting bud.

In fact, the pure ruffianism and obtuse hard-headedness displayed by the public in the matter was quite appalling, and on several occasions very nearly choked the poor poet outright. One rascal whose name was solicited threatened to send the dog after him. A second ruffian offered him so much the hundred for unsold copies of his book when ready to be used as butter paper. A third callous wretch recommended him to shave his head and wear a damp cabbage blade inside his hat as a check to the poetic measles. While another shocking vagabond, of the sarcastic Mark Twain type, asked the poet if the hallucination was a family one? and whether he (the poet) liked his whisky neat or watered? suggesting that he rather thought he preferred it neat, if the seventeen prismatic colours of his highly-artistic nose went for anything!

Pate persevered through it all, however, and finished the business on the right side of the subscription sheet by getting over three hundred pledged subscribers, and about twice the amount of open insults. He had his revenge for the latter by writing a poetical address to those who wouldn't subscribe to the venture, the closing verses of which were as follows:—

Such is the fate of genius, such
  The doom the poet shares;
He and boot leather are *in touch*
  If he but show his wares.
"Be off!" the great man thunders forth.
  The poet, with shock'd ears,
Retires, an injured man of worth,
  To porter! and to tears!

At last, however, Pate's book "cam' oot," and the proud

poet at once proceeded with the distribution of his subscribed-for copies. And here Pate's real troubles began. The job consumed more time and developed more incident than he had bargained for. To begin with, he was more successful in leaving his books with subscribers than in getting paid for them. "Call again" was reiterated in poor Pate's despairing ears fifty times a day. Some paid the half-crown with a grudge; others wanted 3d. off the shilling, as they could purchase books in the town at that rate; while one brick-headed ruffian coolly accepted the book *for nothing*, and flung it carelessly aside, with a grumph.

"Hauf-a-croon, sir, if you please," meekly said the poor poet, extending his open hand.

"For what?" gruffly questioned the savage satirist.

"My book of poems," said Pate.

The next moment the fellow handed back the poet his book, remarking with callous lips—

"There's a jobbing tradesman up the street a bit who slates roofs and damaged heads at a trifling cost. I can recommend you to him. Couldn't entrust your Byronic cocoa-nut to a safer hand."

More personal still, there was a Dutch-built cook serving a family in Monteith Row, in whose praise the guileless poet had indited a perfectly gushing poem, and in which he had addressed her as his "Bonnie Pot o' Jam," making the word "jam" rhyme in every alternate line with an imaginary love-swain called "Tam." This same rather fleshy nymph of the scullery, however, took offence at the "bonnie pot o' jam" comparison, and by way of resentment threatened the poor poet with the "dish-cloot" instead of the more useful half-crown. Under the crucial circumstances, Pate was glad to pocket his volume and cut his stick without further loss of time.

Worse than even that, the unfortunate poet was one day set upon by a local pawnbroker's auctioneer whom he had

rather satirically "poemed," comparing him to a member of the fighting P.R. in the sense that it was his professional business to "knock down" everything that came before him.

The guileless poet thought the comparison was a stroke of pure poetic genius, and secretly complimented himself on its cleverness. The satirised auctioneer, however, took a diametrically opposite view of the matter, and meeting the poet with his books on his back, said he had a precious good mind to knock *him* down on the spot for one.

"It would be very much in the line of your business," the poet faltered out, trying to whistle up his sinking courage.

"Exactly—going, going, *gone!*" replied the auctioneer, and, driving out his dexter fist, down went Sir Poet with his bundle of books on the pavement.

The assailant thereupon walked rapidly off, thinking he had done a rather smart thing—a belief which the knocked-down poet fully shared.

Pate got up and made tracks for home, but experienced considerable difficulty in reaching his humble domicile, for the confusing reason that (thanks to the auctioneer's well-planted right-hander) he was seeing about six different ways at once.

When he did reach his own humble domicile, he sat down by the fireside in a condition of mind which could scarcely be called acutely happy. For the two succeeding days he kept the house, fully occupying his spare time by nursing his damaged eye with a piece of raw steak. Ever afterwards poor Pate's opinion of auctioneers was strictly private and reserved.

As for the newspaper editors to whom he sent copies of his book for review, they, knowing their business better, let him so softly down that the innocent-minded poet thought he was being kindly, not to say handsomely handled, which was indeed the case, though not in the flattering sense that the poet viewed it.

But the "bubbly-jock" of life turned up here also, as ill-luck would have it, in the person of a reviewer of a humorous type, who styled Pate a "rhyme-struck lunatic," and who further declared that the author's book, like his head, had as much wood in it as would successfully swim it ashore from a mid-ocean wreck. He further wagered that Pate was not clever enough to find a rhyme to the word "orange," offering to print a second edition of his poems for nothing if he succeeded.

Pate thought that the proper use of an orange was to be sucked dry, and not to be dragged in as a rhyming corollary. Notwithstanding this, he made an exhaustive effort to find a rhyme to the word "orange," but couldn't. True, he got the length of "porringer" to the word "oranger," but there he was fatally fixed up and pumped dry. No nearer rhyme could he get, try as hard as he would; so the second edition of Pate's gifted book of poems remains unprinted till this day.

The jokes of friends on the sore subject were hard enough to bear, but Pate experienced even a worse sting in the biting sarcasm of his third wife, who had all along expected a new silk gown out of the profits of the poems at the least.

She nagged at him so continuously on the sore subject, and on the "orange" challenge for some days, that the poet at last threw himself into fierce poetic form and wrote out a powerful remonstrance and challenge, which opened as follows:—

Woman, thy mission is to work the pot-stick,
And not to make of me a blooming hot-stick;
To be or not to be? that is the question!
Whether this "orange" and its vile suggestion
Of my poetical incompetence
Is to be trailed under my nasal sense—
T' excite me as a red rag does the bull?
By Shakespeare, no! say I. My soul is full
Of high communings with the Sacred Nine—
Take away that dish-clout!—I am half divine.

It will be guessed from the tone of this lofty and indignant remonstrance that Pate was not only "half divine," but that he was in addition wholly angry, and that he had more than a merely poetical antipathy to that article of domestic use, the dish-clout. The fact is, Pate had a perfect horror of it, as his third wife was in the invariable habit of enforcing her arguments with it by vigorously swinging it round her head, to the serious danger of her husband's beautiful, not to say poetical, nose, the point of which turned itself up to the empyrean airs of heaven as naturally as the flowers turn their petals to the warm sunlight.

Pate was so angry with the jocular editor referred to that he sent him an indignant "epistle" in rhyme, threatening a personal visit on the following afternoon.

Pate called at the editor's office the next day, as threatened. The editor, cleverly estimating his man, had prepared another mild joke at the poor poet's expense.

"Is the editor in?" asked the poet at a counter clerk in the office, which was situated on the ground flat.

"Your name?" said the clerk.

"Pate the poet, they ca' me. I'm the author of——"

"Yes, yes, I thought so. I saw genius in your fine electric-lighted eyes. You deserve a rise in the world. Come this way, please," and he led the guileless poet across the floor to the "hoist," upon which he invited the poet to step.

Pate delightedly did so, and the next moment he found himself alone, and on the decided "rise."

"A real gentleman this commercial man is—a perfect gentleman," said the poet to himself. "He saw genius in my very eyes. Wonder if the stupid owl of an editor will? Not likely, I fear."

Suddenly the hoist stopped short, like somebody's "grandfather's clock," which clock was probably overwound or run

out, as the hoist in question at this particular moment certainly was. Anyhow, the hoist suddenly stopped, and Pate, stepping out, found himself—on the roof!

A workman was busy repairing a damaged bit of the slated portion thereof.

Pate's breath suddenly left him. He had a glimmering suspicion that he had been "sold again," as the Cheap Jacks commonly say of their disposed-of wares.

"Is the editor about?" he timidly inquired of the workman.

"Busy slating his upper storey," said the jocular workman, suggestively tapping his forehead. "If the editor's anywhere, he should be down-stairs, I conclude. Leastways his boots should, of which, if you're a poet, pray have a proper care!"

"Yes, sold again," said the poet to himself, as he sadly turned his fine eyes from the contemplation of this jocular slater.

He went home that day, the poet did, sad at heart, and with the conviction deeply graven on his mind that the newspaper editor was the born "bubbly jock" of the present-day poet—his sworn enemy, his stumbling-block, the fatal bar to his upward singing and winging progress.

Ever afterwards, if an editor's name was mentioned in Pate's hearing, especially in connection with poetry, the poet invariably shied at the head of the offending party the article nearest at his hand at the particular moment, which was a pewter porter-pot oftener than anything else; or, failing that, the blackened remains of a smoked-out clay pipe.

Such, alas! is too often the sad fate of genius—such the dire insults and contumely to which that exquisite and neglected being, the poet, is too often forced to suffer during his melancholy progress through this wicked and prosaic wilderness of thorns.

We conclude the tragically amusing record of Pate's

graphic experiences as a Scotch poet by quoting one of his own finest and truest stanzas:—

THE POET'S FATE!

Misluck and trouble haunt the poet's life,
  Who oft resorts to gentle shifts and tricks,
Run down, his fine soul wearies of the strife—
  Denying IOU's and dodging bricks!
Thus, thus the poet lives, his angel wings
  Worn to the bone on life's hard, flinty rocks;
His harp of gold repaired with old ham-strings,
  His last reward—a pauper's wooden box!

COMING HAME FOU.

George Shuttle was a handloom weaver in the auld Calton, of Glasgow. He was a man of an extremely douce, canny, and auld-fashioned type—a type of Scottish craftsmen, now all but passed away.

Geordie had a stick-leg, the result of an accident in early life, which added to rather than detracted from the humour of his interesting personality. Geordie was monomaniac on his stick leg. He nursed it like a baby, and found it useful in a variety of ways. His wife, Mattie, was a "managing" woman, and would have managed Geordie as a bit of the ordinary house furniture but for his stick leg, which he usually screwed off as a safe weapon of defence when Mattie was threatening hostilities. In this sense, the screwing-off of his locomotive appendage was to Geordie what the celebrated "Old Guard" was to the great Napoleon—a sort of final and unfailing go-in-and-win reserve force, the mere threat of which usually took the stiff starch out of Mattie.

"Anither word, Mattie, an' aff comes the stick leg!"

That invariably was Geordie's last sheet-anchor hope during any more than usually heavy domestic gale. The

wind commonly fell quiet after that, just like fair magic. The amusing circumstance I have now to tell refers to a certain occasion on which Geordie—worthy man!—came home "fou" from a Masons' meeting one night, and his wife's rather warm reception of him, with the scene which followed.

There are, perhaps, worse trials in life than a man coming hame fou on a Saturday night; but there are, at the same time, few trials which are so bitterly resented by the thrifty housewife, especially if the guidman happens to come home with his pouches pick't bare, as is, alas! only too often the case in the circumstances.

Not that honest Mattie, the weel-faured and equally weel-meaning spouse of our homely hero, had often cause to complain on this sore score. Not at all. Geordie Shuttle was ordinarily a douce, weel-ordered, canny-gaun Christian, who took a "gless" and let it alone, as wise folks for the most part do. He was not quite immaculate, however, any more than his neighbour craftsmen, and the text of this chapter was occasioned by the recollection of Geordie's home-coming from a Masons' quarterly meeting one night more than half-a-century ago, as mixed as a handful of coppers, and seeing six ways at once.

Geordie's presence outside the door of his house that night, just as the auld Parish Kirk bell in the vicinity was tolling out the solemn hour of twelve, was made manifest to his alarmed wife Mattie, by a series of unsuccessful and ludicrous attempts on the part of the old weaver to find the keyhole of the door.

Mattie, who had been waiting his delayed return with a mixture of anger and alarm, quickly rose to her feet and went towards the door, not quite certain whether the person outside was her foolish husband, or, dreadful thought, a midnight burglar!

She was very soon disabused of her nervous fears on the

latter score, however, although equally alarmed on another point. Placing her ear close against the door, she distinctly heard her husband say to himself—

"No, no, Maggie Glen; nae mair for me, my dear woman, if *you* please; no anither drap for me. If I was to gang hame this night wi' jist the wee'st drappie in my left e'e, oor Mattie would pu' a the feathers oot o' my heid; no anither drap for me, if *you* please."

Mattie started as if she had been suddenly shot at.

"Wha cood Maggie Glen be?" she quickly asked herself, "that was sae gracious wi' the whisky jar—an' anither wife's man!"

Listening again, she distinctly heard Geordie say—

"Whaur's that blessed keyhole? I'm hang'd if Mattie hisna filled up the keyhole o' the door wi' potty. A fine trick to play me! But I'm up to her wee bit game. She wants to mak' me knock her up so as she'll see what time I come hame, an' in what specific condition I may happen to be in, so as she can lecture me accordingly. But she'll no ken, no even if I should hae to tak' the Clyde for't this precious night."

This said, Geordie turned on his left heel, or, more strictly speaking, on his stick leg, and made to leave the spot.

The next moment the door flew open, and a voice was heard—not exactly the persuasive voice of Maggie Glen, "my dear"—but the veritable voice of his wife Mattie frozen into a hard, cold, cutting edge by the just anger of her jealous mind.

"George! George Shuttle! come back here this moment!" the voice came after him.

Instantly Geordie stopped short, like a suddenly over-wound clock, with a sort of gasping snap.

"It's Mattie's heavenly-toned voice I hear," he cautiously whispered to himself. "Lord! I'm in for't noo! I'll catch it hot!"

Wheeling about, Geordie attempted to steady himself on his best leg, keeping the "stick-yin" spinning round as a handy "balancer," in case the flagstones of the pavement should rise suddenly up and attempt, in an excess of affection, to kiss him on the brow.

"Weel, Mattie, my dear!" was Geordie's loving salutation, as he turned about and steadily faced his angry better-half.

Mattie cast a severe glance at him, surveyed his disordered externals for a moment, so to speak, and saw that it was, indeed, her own foolish husband, under the undue influence of drink, and visibly out of his usual douce and canny wits.

Yes, there was no mistake about the man, or the stick leg either. But the hat on his head? How came he by that strange hat, she wondered. It was not her Geordie's hat, whosever it might turn out to be. That was certain. Geordie invariably wore a woollen cap of her own thrifty knitting. And this was a hat—a veritable "lum hat," too! And, what was more mysterious still, it was positively a policeman's hat.

What could it all mean, Mattie wondered? It was the body, certainly, but not the hat of Esau!

It meant what Mattie did not, of course, just then know—viz., that Geordie had forgathered with a Highland policeman on the way home, and had shared with him a good mutchkin of whisky from a bottle which he had filled before leaving Maggie Glen's. The constable and our homely hero had grown so very gracious and confiding over the dram that in an excess of social humour they had actually exchanged hats; and what was very natural under the peculiar circumstances, on parting they had quite forgotten to restore to each other their exchanged headgear! And here, therefore, was the humiliating spectacle of douce, canny-gaun Geordie Shuttle knocking for admission at his own door at twelve o'clock at night, as fou's the Clyde, an', waur than even that, with a common toon-policeman's

hat on! The humour of the situation was intensified by the fact that Geordie was unaware of the distinction he was thus carrying aloft on his homely and unambitious head, having quite forgotten everything appertaining to the whole matter.

"Mattie, my dear, I was saying," the conscience-stricken husband at length ventured to repeat.

"Don't 'dear' me, George Shuttle," retorted Mattie, in a tone of offended pride. "Keep that fine word for Miss Margeret Glen, whaever she may be, ye vaigabond!"

"*Ha, ha, ha!*" laughed aloud Geordie. "Maggie Glen, the snuffy auld brewster wife wha supplies the dram. Is that whaur this sherp an' snelly side-win' is blawin' aff o'? H'm! a puir enough bit caunle en' to licht a fire at!"

"Ay, an' a bonnie dram she's gien ye, atweel, that keeps ye spinnin' aboot there, at twal o'clock o' nicht, like a schule laddie's peerie newly aff the string; an', waur than that, sen's ye hame here wantin' yer seven senses, an' wi' a polisman's hat on yer heid! A bonnie dram, atweel!"

Geordie at this juncture put up his hand to his head, and sure enough there, indeed, was the policeman's veritable tile sticking up on the back of his rather mixed head, giving him for all the world the appearance of a craw-bogle which had just newly walked away from some suburban potato field.

The revelation was a staggerer to the man of yarn, but he was equal to the occasion.

"*Wheesht! wheesht!* Mattie; if ony o' the twa o's has a richt to fa' oot wi' ither, it's me wi' you," he resumed with suddenly-acquired spirit, the drink giving his canny nerves a sort of heeze up on the dyke, so to speak.

"George Shuttle!" said Mattie, by way of very stern reproof. She always said George, and never Geordie, when her "spunk was up," as our pawky hero put it. But it wouldn't draw this time.

"Oh, ye may 'George' me frae this till Martinmas, if ye

like, Mattie," retorted the husband, still maintaining his distant position outside the house door. "Of the twa o's, Mattie, ye're maist in the blame, I maintain."

"*Me* maist in the blame?" indignantly exclaimed Mattie.

"Undoubtedly," said Geordie, with as much authoritative solemnity as his swimming head would allow him to summon up. "Wha filled the keyhole o' the door wi' potty to keep me frae getting in this check key, eh?"

Mattie gazed at her husband and the article he displayed in his hand in severe silence.

"Ha, woman, I have ye nately there, eh!"

"D'ye ca' that a door-key?" sneered Mattie in return.

Geordie looked at the article he was holding so triumphantly in his right hand, and lo! *it was a cork-screw!*

"On second thochts, Mattie, I think it will not be advisable to unduly protract this discussion, considerin' the time o' nicht," remarked the defeated husband.

"Oh, yes; a fine exkuse, efter comin' hame drunk wi' a polisman's hat on yer stupid heid, an' a cork-screw in yer han' for a door-key, nae less!"

"Haud a bit, Matttie; haud a bit, if you please. There's no muckle wrang wi' the hat, as far as I can see, eh?"

"An' that's scarcely across the brig o' yer ain nose the nicht," thrust in Mattie with keen sarcasm.

"There's no muckle the maitter wi' the auld hat, I was sayin', and still less wrang wi' the heid that's noo in it. An' as for being drunk, I'll no thole to be ca'd drunk, sae lang's I can keep my twa feet firmly. But I'll cairry this interesting question to the back-shop for further discussion the morn's forenoon. Meantime I'll tak' the inside o' the door the nicht, Mattie, wi' your gracious permission, for my heid's whirlin' roon like a bit paper on a windy day. But, Mattie, dinna ye say I'm drunk when I'm fair, square, an' sober; for that's what I'll no thole, fecht me wha likes."

"No drunk?" sneered Mattie, as she followed her husband

into the house. "Look at yer condition, an' jist look at the state o' yer claes; glaured frae heid to fit, an' a great rent in yer widden leg that a sixpence worth o' glue 'll no sowther."

"It was bitten by a dowg," thrust in Geordie.

"An' as for yer heid," continued Mattie, with increasing sarcasm, "it's clean reversed roon', an's a' tapsalteerie. Ca'in an auld cork-screw a door key! an' comin' hame wi' a polisman's hat stuck on the back o' yer heid, lookin' for a' the worl' like an auld bauchle stuck on a pole for the bairns to pap stanes at. There's fine, douce, respectable conduct for a kirk-elder—sobriety and rale fine first-rate common-sense, bonnily illustrated and exemplified. To complete the picture ye only want one thing, Mister Shuttle, noo that I see ye in the licht."

"An', pray, what's that, Mistress Shuttle, if *you* please?"

"Yer pouches turned ootside in, an' yer breeks drawn on wrang-side foremost," answered Mattie with smiling sarcasm.

"Go you to Dumbarton! I'm as square an' richt this nicht as sixpence o' coppers—no a bawbee short in the coont."

"May be?" retorted Mattie, "but I dinna believe ye hae sense enough left to blaw oot a lichtit caunle."

"It wad tak' a lot to extinguish you, onyway, as I ken to my cost this nicht," boldly thrust in the man of yarn, divesting himself of his coat and suddenly flinging himself on the top of the bed, his temper visibly on the rise.

"I declare if the madman's no gaun to bed wi' his buits on, and a polisman's hat on his heid!" exclaimed Mattie, clasping her two hands together in astonishment.

"Confound you and the hat baith," replied the wroth husband, and, taking sharp aim, he made the discussed hat spin in the direction of Mattie's head, who cleverly ducked in neat time, and so saved her sonsie countenance from abuse.

"Drunk! ay, dangerously, murderously, drunk!" was Mattie's bitter retort.

"Anither word, Mattie, an' aff comes the stick leg!"

"Oh, mercy! murder—polis!" yelled Mattie, knowing that if the stick leg once came off she was in for a chase round the kitchen. "Polis!"

"A' richt, Mattie; if the polisman's absent, ye've his hat beside ye, at the least, an' that's certainly better than jist naething ava', if it's no very muckle after a'. Meantime, I'm for a sleep, my dear. Till the morn's mornin' *ta ta*, or as the polite letter-writers say, 'till we next meet.'—Yours most respectfully, "GEORDIE SHUTTLE."

This said, our pawky-minded hero kicked off his one boot, drew the bedclothes up to his chin, and, composing his somewhat excited nerves as best he could, he was very soon in the arms of Morpheus, his after dreams being acutely vivified with many curious sensations born of Maggie Glen's potent whisky, the main picture of which was a full-sized front view of his angry spouse solemnly reading the moral law to him, the background being awkwardly filled up with something remarkably like a badly crushed policeman's hat!

THE BATHING O' THE STICK LEG.

To gang doon to the saut watter for a week, at least once in the year, is what the humblest Glasgow working-man commonly aspires to, and very generally accomplishes. He views it as a sort of necessity of the family's well-being and existence, and, in concert with his wife, he usually lays by something for the occasion, and prepares for its advent weeks before its actual date.

The preparation for this annual "Fair" holiday-time is commonly a rather acute experience to the average working-man, in the way of a grand new hat for the wife, and any

amount of new hats, boots, and pinafores for the weans. As for the guidman himself, he is more easily disposed of. His forty-year-auld waddin' hat is often brought forth to the light of day, and specially black-leaded for the important occasion, and, with that on his head, an auld-fashioned carpet-bag in his hand, and the wife and weans by his side, his condition *en route* for the Broomielaw is not to be lightly sneezed at.

Now, auld Geordie Shuttle and his worthy spouse, Mattie, had made up their minds to "gang doon the watter"—a necessity which was rendered more needful in view of Geordie's stick leg, which had been fu' o' the rheumatics all the preceding winter, and which wanted sea-bathing and a change of air very much; at least, so Geordie declared, and Mattie accepted the position of affairs as a rale guid chance for her an' the weans getting a week at the coast.

It was an awfu' business getting a' thing ready for the jaunt. A wife o' fourteen stane in wecht, six or eicht weans, a perambulator, three carpet-bags, and half-a-dizen o' umbrellas is nae wee joke to get flitted doon to the Broomielaw.

The Shuttle family got there all right, however.

And now that the family were really at the sea-side, it was no more than was their right, not to say their bounden duty, to take the fullest advantages of the benefits it offered to their physical health and well-being.

This mental conviction affected the individual members of the Shuttle family in different ways.

In the case of the family juveniles it meant, so far as opportunity would allow of, the search for "wulks," mussels, and cockles along the exposed fore-shore.

In worthy Mattie's case it very much resolved itself into a splendid opportunity of showing off her grand new bonnet —a magnificent article, specially purchased and trimmed for the occasion.

Relative to Geordie, he wisely seized on the opportunity

it offered him of trying the much-vaunted effects of saut watter bathing for the rheumatics in his ailing stick leg. It was his one oddly weak point, this careful nursing of his locomotive appendage. He had worn it so long that he regarded it as virtually part and parcel of his body corporate. And thus viewing it, what was more natural than that he should now and again feel "stoonds" of pain gaun through it when he incautiously set it down on a bit of broken glass, or that a twinge o' the rheumatics should fasten on't as often as the cauld east winds blew ?

Next morning found Geordie down at the shore, placidly sitting on a bit of wave-worn rock, his leg of wood inserted in the cool sea.

Before setting forth on his bathing expedition he had strongly advised, and indeed insisted on Mattie hersel' gaun' doun to the shore alang wi' the family, and getting them all to partake freely of the salt water.

"An' as for yersel', Mattie," he added, "if ye're wice ye'll drink weel o't as weel's the rest, for there's no' a better medicine than saut watter, I'm telt. It's an uncommonly halesome drink, everybody says ; an' if I was you, Mattie, I wadna spare it, wi' the chance o't for the liftin'."

"No, no ; I'll no spare't, seein' that it's sae cheap. I'll stick by the saut-watter bottle, Mister Shuttle, an' you'll stick by the grand wee doctor wi' the stoot body and the braid bannet—the gill-stoup ! Thank you, Mister Shuttle, thank you, very kindly ! You're a maist mindfu', considerate, an' feelin' husband. If my second man's half as guid to me as ye've aye been, I'll bury him wi' tears in my twa e'en."

"Oh, hang you!" exclaimed the wroth husband, and crushing his hat down on his head, he set off in a hurry for the shore.

The spot that Geordie selected for the "lubrification" of his wooden limb was a good couple of miles west along the shore.

He was alone among the rocks, if we except the limpets

that stuck to them, and the white-feathered sea-gulls that flew about the shore.

What a delicious pleasure it was to bathe his stick leg in the cool salt sea! It was like rubbin't wi' saft treacle.

For a full half-hour he sat thus, ruminating to himself, and wondering how his auld cronies in the Calton o' Glesca were getting on. If they saw him down here, perched on the rocks, and with his ailing leg of wood plankit in the sea, what would they say to it, he wondered. Here he had seclusion, however, and that was a great mercy, especially to a man who had ways of his own, as he had, and who was determined to act up to them.

But no! perfect seclusion was not to be had even here. For was not yon a human being—a veritable man in a hat—coming dodging along the shore in his direction, stick in hand, and with a book under his arm?

It was; and, anticipatory of his visit, Geordie drew up his leg of wood, wet from the sea waves, and composedly awaited his approach.

Nearer and nearer the stranger came, twirling his yellow cane in the air, and looking generally as if he was happy with himself and his surroundings, and owned besides a good half of the land round about.

Geordie glanced inquisitively in his direction, and saw in that brief glance that the stranger wore a broad-brimmed Quaker's hat, looked through a pair of very noticeable blue goggles, and had generally the abstracted air of a man of deep thought and study.

"Good morning, friend. I give thee grateful salutation," remarked the tall, impressive-looking stranger.

"Ay, it's a gran' mornin'—as fresh as mussels," returned our canny hero.

"Hast thou been taking thy morning bath, friend, as I have just been doing?" continued the speaker, twirling a damp towel in the air.

"I hast," learnedly answered Geordie, "to the length o' my left leg only."

"Ah! anything special the matter with the limb?"

"I'm sair fash't wi' the rheumatics in't," frankly answered Geordie, with perfect sincerity.

"Indeed! a bad complaint—a very trying trouble indeed. Have you tried anything special for its cure, may I kindly ask?"

"Naething mair special than rowin't carefully up in warm flannel at nicht an' stovin't wi' the heat o' the fire."

"Won't do, my friend—won't do. You should get a gill of good old brandy and rub the ailing limb with it night and morning."

"I wad much prefer to tak' it inwardly an' syne blaw my breath on't, if it cam' to the same thing in the end."

"Ha, ha, ha! now, now, friend! now, now!"

"But, waur than that," added Geordie, with sincere feeling, "I met wi' an accident yae nicht aboot three months since—or rather, my left leg did."

"Oh, I'm truly sorry for that, friend."

"An' so am I—deeply and painfully sorry," chimed in Geordie, with a bit quiet laugh.

"And pray, friend, how did it happen?"

"Ye see, I was comin' hame frae Maggie Glen's public-hoose yae nicht, up bye in the auld Calton o' Glesca, ye ken, wi' a wee drap in the corner o' my left e'e—no' very much, ye ken; only aboot fowrpence worth, aff and on——"

"Fourpence worth! Yes, proceed."

"Weel, I wasna mair nor ten yairds frae my ain door-cheek when I put my fit doun on a bit orange skin, or something like it, an' doun I cam' wi' my left leg aneath me, gien't an ugly thraw. I thocht sma' on't at the moment, but next mornin' it pained me much. It was swall't badly, an' was a' oot in a red rash."

"Inflammation," thrust in the stranger. "It should

have been leeched at once, to draw away the inflamed blood."

"Bluid, did ye say?" questioned Geordie. "Weel, I never gaed the length o' threepin' there was bluid in't, but I've worn't sae lang noo that I'll mainteen there's distinct feelin' in't, deny't wha likes."

"What! no blood in a man's leg?" put in the stranger, very pompously; "why, there's not a limb of the human body secretes more blood than do the legs."

"But stop! stop! let me explain," thrust in Geordie, who now saw that the stranger was totally unaware of his stick leg; "let me explain."

"One moment, friend," blandly interposed the stranger. "Kindly let *me* first explain. You see, I know a little, just a little, of the practical pathology of the case. Observe, a man falls with his right leg under him——"

"But it's my left leg that's the bother," thrust in Geordie.

"Exactly," acquiesced the bland stranger. "A man falls, I now say, with his left leg under him——"

"Ye're pu'in' the richt cork noo."

"He rises slightly lame," continued the stranger, "and hobbles off, thinking little, perhaps, of the accident. Next morning the limb is swollen, and great pain ensues. And why? Why, because the sinews have been unduly strained, the blood is arrested in its flow, the——"

"Ye will hae bluid in't, I see, richt or wrang," murmured Geordie, half aloud.

"The blood is arrested in its flow, I was remarking; swelling sets rapidly in as a natural consequence of the checked circulation, and pain, hot and incessant, is the certain result. Logical deduction: apply leeches to draw away the coagulated blood, and hot fomentations to ease the pain and lay the swelling—and there you are!"

"Quite so, sir; quite so. Looks a' very fine in theory, I admit; but I canna for the life o' me see hoo a' this learned

rigmarole aboot strained sinews, checked circulation, and coagulated bluid fits in wi' the reed o' the widd?" replied Geordie, holding up his stick leg for the first time within six inches of the stranger's astonished eyes and nose.

The reed of the wood! Was it possible?

The stranger fell back about three feet in dire dismay, exclaiming—

"Great St. Mungo! have I actually been all the time considering the pathology of a wooden leg?"

"That's so," acceded Geordie, tossing up his game leg in mid-air once more, to the imminent danger of the stranger's blue goggles. "There it is—a teuch auld bit o' weel-seasoned widd. I'll tak' my affy-davy there's feelin' in't—rale, genuine human feelin'; but as for bluid, pathology here or pathology there, there's no' a single drap o' bluid in't frae end to end. It whites easily to the knife, like the heft o' a schule-laddie's whup. But cheese the bluid! there's no' a single drap in't."

The stranger was, if possible, still more flabbergasted than before.

"Good-bye, friend," he quickly said, turning on his heels; "there are lunatics abroad, I fear."

"Ditto wi' dots!" Geordie cried after him; "I jist pairted wi' yin wearin' blue specks this very moment. Guid-bye!"

WHEN IS A MAN FOU?

"An' hoo dae ye feel yersel' this mornin', Tammas?" was Peggy Wilson's somewhat satirical salutation to her husband one mornin' lately, as she placed his bowl of porridge on the table before him; "no very weel, I'll warrant ye."

"I feel sae awfu' bad owre the wee tait I had last nicht that I'm jist tryin' to realize what it wad be to be actually fou," Tammas made answer.

"An' was ye no really fou last nicht, think ye, Mister Tammas?"

"No, I was not, Mistress Wilson; nae mair than you are this minute."

"Weel, that bates a'!" explained Peggy, with manifest surprise. "A man that coodna, for the life o' him, keep his twa feet thegither, an' was seein' nae less than six different ways at yince, to say he wasna drunk! It fair bates a'!"

"That'll dae, Peggy: no anither word, if you please. We'll drap the domestic anchor there, an' lie each to our ain moorings, as the foreign sailors frae Dumbarton say."

Having thus summarily disposed of his wife, Tammas thought he would next try to finally dispose of the question at issue by asking in succession every chance acquaintance he met that day — "When is a man drunk?"

"Now, the first man he chanced to meet that day was Johnny Rhymer, the drapers' poet. Johnny was a wasted genius who had set out on the ocean of literature with his eye on the laureateship, but had early got firmly moored to the whisky barrel, and had never got beyond it. Johnny got a living by writing poetical advertisements for the city drapers, spent his days in the public house, and his nights in the model lodging-houses of the town, and being a man of a very warm imagination, he was fairly happy in the contemplation of his lot.

"Now," thought Tammas to himself, "here comes Johnny Rhymer, the poet, he shood be able to answer the question satisfactorily, if ony man shood."

The next moment the two friends were confronting each other.

"Guid mornin', Johnny. I've a question to put to ye, an' I think ye're as able as ony man to settle the point."

"If ye wad kindly pit the pint inside a pewter stowp, whatever it may turn oot to be, I'd settle it wi' the greatest

pleasure," said the poet, smacking his parched lips very suggestively.

"By an' bye, Johnny. But my question is this—When is a man really drunk ?"

"Well," replied the poet, "I consider a man unmistakably drunk—

> When hiccups interrupt his broken talk,
> And the domestic plank he cannot walk:

An exalted mental condition, by the way, to which I am seldom permitted to transport myself—more's the pity!—for, like all true poets, I am poor, very poor, and have to keep up the divine steam on random drinks of sma' beer and copious libations of treacle swats.

> Such is the modern poet's fate, alas!
> Such his most cruel and pathetic luck:
> He asks for bread, perhaps also a "glass,"
> And at his gentle head a murderous brick they chuck!

The next man that Tammas met that day was auld Rab Morrison, the blacksmith, so, without any ado, Tammas put the question to him direct, "When is a man drunk ?"

"It's an involved question," answered the blacksmith, "an' has depths in't like the Atlantic that nae ordinary lead can fathom. Some wad hae't that a man's drunk when he canna rise an' walk hame; ithers say a chiel's fair fou when he canna successfully bite his ain thoomb; some ithers again haud an' maintain that a man's no' strictly sober when his tongue 'll no' lie still. But if that's the case, when are the women folks sober? *(Hear, hear,* from Tammas.) It's generally admitted, however," continued the blacksmith, "that a man's no strictly sober when he accosts a pump-well on the roadside, warmly shakes it by the handle, ca's it his auld frien' an' social brither, an' ends the comedy by tryin' to licht his pipe at the spout."

Our friend Tammas here admitted that the blacksmith had scored a decided point.

"But relative to the humour of the dram," continued the blacksmith, "let me here tell you the funny story of Wee Johnny Seam, a dram-loving tailor, whose stature was extremely little, and whose head was twisted round so far as to lie on his left shoulder, the result of an accident at birth. Johnny was a confirmed tippler, going as far on every social occasion as his own pocket or a cronie's generosity would allow of. He had been drinking one night in a small tavern in the Trongate, and on rising to take the road home he found himself prettily mixed about the upper storey. The experience, however, was in no sense a new one to the wee tippling tailor, who steadied himself on his two feet most heroically, and refusing help, and even well-timed advice, took the road home like a soldier. Whatever was in the dram that night, it seemed to act soporifically on the wee tailor's senses, for on reaching the middle of the auld Stockwell Brig Johnny sat down with his back leaning against the stone parapet, and fell fast asleep. Presently a couple of wayfarers passed by, and seeing the wee body sitting on the cauld stanes, a' thrawn and doobled up like a bit o' broken stick, the yin said to the ither—

"A sair fa' this wee chap's gotten; his neck's fair set, I fear; let's lift him."

This they tried to do, and having sat him bolt upright, they then tried to twist round his thrawn head straight.

"Stop! stop!" shouted the wee tailor, waking suddenly up; "wad ye thraw my neck like a hen's, ye murderous rascals?"

"Steady a moment, my wee mannie! steady!" said yin o' the twa operators, and—crack! roond once more they wrenched the wee tailor's thrawn heid, who, now thoroughly awakened to a true sense of the situation, again yelled aloud—

"Stop, lads, stop! leave my heid alane; *it sits aye that way! it sits aye that way!*"

"Man," said our frien' Tammas, with a laugh on his honest face as broad as the Clyde at Dumbarton, "I can tell ye as guid a yin as that aboot Weaver Wull, o' Parkhead. Wull, ye maun ken, had an awfu' love for the dram, an' greed wi't like his mither's milk. Now Wull, as was too often the case, happened to get fearfu' fou one night in the Auld Nightingale Tavern, at the heid o' the Gleska Sautmarket. In forging his way home east to Parkhead, Wull felt so forfochten, and so completely dead tired, that he sat down on the road in a quate corner, and, leaning his back against a dyke, was soon fast asleep. Some young Camlachie blades, seeing Wull snoring soond asleep, quickly resolved to tak' a rise oot o' him, so they gently carried him to a dark underground cellar in the neighbourhood. Getting some phosphorus frae a druggist's apprentice, they rubbed it freely on their own and on Wull's hands and face, and then rudely wakened him up. Wull, seeing the diabolic state he was in, inquired fearfully—

"Whaur am I?"

"Ye're deid," said one of the jokers in a solemn voice.

"Good Lord! hoo long hiv I been deid!"

"A fortnicht," was the ready answer.

"An' are ye deid, too?" anxiously inquired Wull.

"That's so," again came the ready reply.

"An' hoo lang hiv you been deid?"

"Three months."

"Then," said Wull, quickly recovering his worldly appetite, "ye'll be much better acquaint hereaboot than I am; hae, there's a shillin'; awa' oot an' see if ye can bring us in half-a-mutchkin, for I'm spittin' white sixpences, an' my heid's gaun roon' as fast's a coach wheel rinnin' to a hogmanay marriage.

"Very good," laughed the blacksmith with the rest, "but for a still funnier mixing o' the mental mortar, take this story of two social imbibers:—A pair of worthy Glasgow

bailies, rather fond of their toddy, retired from their regular house of call to a quiet spot in Glasgow Green one fine evening, where they sat down on a bench to enjoy their favourite beverage alone, having previously supplied their coat-pockets with a sufficient quantity of liquor. After imbibing pretty freely, they both fell asleep where they sat. The night was dark and starless, and about midnight one of the sleepers rose off the seat with the laudable intention of properly retiring to rest. Not knowing his whereabouts, he wandered blankly about the Green for a while, groping in the dark for the side of the room, that he might thereby feel his way to the door. Failing of his purpose, he ultimately stumbled over his still sleeping companion, whom he rudely awoke, remarking—

"Surely, Bailie, this is an awfu' big room, for, hang me, if I can find the door, though I've been graipin' for't for the last half hour."

"I ken naething aboot the size o' the room," hiccuped his brither-cronie, "but yae thing's certain (looking up to the sky), *it has a most tremendous heich ceilin'*."

"Then the point o' the discussion comes to what?" asked our amused and slightly confused friend, Tammas.

"To this," answered the sensible blacksmith, "that a man's never strictly sober when he's beyond the domestic teacup, an' that he's fair drunk-fou when he canna fin' the keyhole o' his ain door, hings up his buits on twa separate hat-pegs, throws his hat on the floor, puts his clothes to bed instead o' himsel', an' finally throws himsel' doon on the fender till next mornin'. Under such conditions, there can be little rational doubt that a man's geyan weel on, as the sayin' is, if no completely fou."

Our friend Tammas admitted the point, and so ended the amusing discussion—"When is a man fou?"

WASHIN' JEAN'S COMIC MARRIAGE.

There is humour and farce in almost all ranks and conditions of life; but, somehow, the broad-featured mask of Fun seems to fit the homelier phases of life better and more naturally than it does the higher grades of society. There is, perhaps, too much formalism and red tape in the upper crust of the social loaf to allow of the free play of native humour and character, qualities which, like so many shifting side-lights, are continually breaking through the darkness and poverty of lowly life. The following amusing story of a courtship and marriage in homely life is a case in point:—

Washin' Jean, as she was familiarly called, was a stout-bodied, hard-visaged, middle-aged nymph of the sop-and-suds profession, that is to say, she was a common work-a-day washer-wife of the hard-wrought, splashin', two shillings-a-day type.

Now, Jean, although only a common washer-wife, was still a woman, and being unmarried, she had still an e'e on the men, and some natural interest in their disposal.

The fact is, although Jean was only a washer-wife, and forty-five years of age, she had a bit of natural romance hidden away under her cotton short-gown which the neighbours round about her hardly suspected.

In secret she sighed and wearied for a bit man, if for naething better than jist to keep her fire-en' warm and furnished-like, and to mak' her mair like her married neighbours roon' aboot. She was often good-humouredly teased on the subject, and didn't particularly relish the banter, which caused her often to sing to herself the following auld maid's ditty:—

> Wae's me! for I'm noo forty-five,
> Tho' some even mair wad me ca';

And yin that's sae lang getting married
  Has little or nae chance ava.
An' when I reflect upon this,
  Lang sighs frae my bosom I draw;
For oh! it's most awfu' to think
  I'm no to be married ava.

Oh, I wish I could get a bit husband,
  Altho' he were never sae sma';
Be he little or muckle, I'd tak' him—
  Big or wee is nae maitter ava'.
Come sutor, come tailor, come tinkler!
  Oh! come an' but tak' me awa'!
Jist gi'e me a bid ne'er sae little,
  I'll tak' it an' never sae na!

Come deaf, or come dumb, or come cripple,
  Wi' yae leg or nae leg ava',
Or come yin wi' yae e'e or nae e'e,
  I'll tak' him as ready's wi' twa.
Come young, or come auld, or come doited—
  Oh! come ony yin o' ye a'!
Faur better be married to something
  Than no to be married ava'!

But everything comes to those who patiently wait, it is said, and Washin' Jean at last got her chance matrimonial, and—took it.

There was an old dram-drinking Waterloo pensioner who lived in the next court, named Dick Macpherson, and who was better known in the neighbourhood as Corporal Dick.

Dick had served his king and country well in his day and generation as a gallant corporal in the 91st Argyleshire Highland Light Infantry, and, on the expiry of his long-service term, he had been duly pensioned off and relegated to the corps of city pensioners, once familiarly known in Glasgow as the "Auld Fuggies."

Now, like the majority of old military pensioners, Corporal Dick dearly loved a dram, and invariably went heartily for it every quarterly pension-day.

In what way Corporal Dick had got round Washin' Jean, or she, perhaps, had got round him, it is not needful to tell. Suffice it to say, the pair came together as lovers, in some odd way, and as Jean could work for her living, and Corporal Dick enjoyed a quarterly pension from the Government of his country, they respectively seemed a catch in each other's eyes, and so fell to the courting of each other, like two old road-side linties.

"If I only had her," thought Corporal Dick to himself, "I could live off her earnings at the wash-tub, an' drink my pension-money every quarterly pay-day like a lord. She's well worth the catchin'."

And—"If I only had him," thought Washin' Jean to herself, "I could throw up my wearifu' washin' boin, an' live aff the auld general's pension-money. He's weel worth the catchin'."

Being thus both of a mind regarding the value of each other, their courtship was very short, and the upshot of it was correspondingly practical and to the point.

Whether or not the old war-dog ever formally proposed marriage to Washin' Jean is uncertain. If so, the text of the proposal has not reached us. If it was indeed so, the gallant old foggy no doubt announced the proposal in the manner of a regular hand-at-cap military salute.

Anyhow the question seems to have been duly popped and sufficiently understood, in whatever way expressed, and that so expeditiously, too, as to put the marriage of the mature pair under actual arrangement prior to the arrival of the very next quarterly pension-day.

Everything seemed to have gone thus far in terms of the old proverb, as merry as a marriage-bell, when a small cloud of disagreement suddenly discovered itself in the rosy sky of their graphic love affair, thus once more realizing the ancient truism—the course of true love never did run smooth.

The bone of contention between the pair was at once trifling and serious, in the sense that, concerning a very slight affair, a stiff bit of temper was exhibited on both sides, which in the end all but cracked up the consummation of the forthcoming marriage.

The dispute was about Corporal Dick's marriage suit. For Dick, with the strong martial instincts of an old soldier, wanted to sincerely honour his Queen, his country, and himself by getting married in his semi-military pensioner's suit. He wanted also to wear side-arms, and would have even brought his old Waterloo musket along with him to the minister's as well, if he had been permitted to have his own way.

His prospective better-half, however, knocked the mad proposition completely on the head, and the old soldier unwillingly surrendered both musket and side-arms to mollify her displeasure, but stood firmly up for being married, like a true soldier, in his old military dress.

Jean was thus in a fix. The old Waterloo hero was determined on the point, she saw, and to have the match broken off would be to once more expose herself to the by no means complimentary clash of the neighbours. Still, to give in to Corporal Dick in this initial matter, small as it appeared, was to sell herself into prospective bondage and slavery. At least so Jean hastily reasoned within her own mind. She wouldn't consent to this degradation, she finally concluded; no, she wouldn't! The stumbling-block was that the hardy old veteran wouldn't agree to the marriage on any other terms.

"I'll surrender my musket and side-arms for love's sweet sake," he firmly told her over and over again, "but my military dress—never! Rule Britannia, say I, and God save the Queen!"

What was to be done?

Jean was a woman of some resource. She thought the

position thoroughly out in all its phases, and ultimately came to a decided resolution on the matter, a smile of malicious sarcasm irradiating her rather dun countenance at the amusing thought of it. What that resolution was she wisely kept to herself, but proceeded at once to act upon it and bring it on to a successful issue.

"Jean," said the old pensioner to her one day, as an ultimatum, "is the marriage fixed or off?

> This suspense interferes with my digestion.
> To be or not to be, that is the question?

Marry me in my soldier's suit, or not at all. What sayest thou?"

"Oh, hae't yer ain stiff way, Corporal Dick, an' there's the end o't. But if ye're to be marrit in yer sodjer's claes, I'll come in my printed short-goon."

"All right, I'm willing," said the old soldier, and then he gallantly kissed his betrothed on the left cheek with a smack like the report of a percussion cap, and called her his brave soldier lassie.

And thus the affair was, so far, amicably settled, and things looked all serene for the gallant old soldier.

Now, there lived and laboured in the East-end of Glasgow at that time a certain witty and worthy old-fashioned Cameronian preacher of the very plain and practical school, called the Rev. David Gregg.

Now, the Rev. David Gregg was both wise and witty in his way, and was sometimes original to a point in his interpretation of the knotty bits of Scripture. His stipend was small, but he substantially added to it by hiring himself out for the consummation of marriages in humble life. In this way, when the marrying season was on, he used to go out of an evening and tie the knots in regular rotation, much after the fashion of a medical man making his calls on the sick.

Accordingly, the Rev. David Gregg was very naturally

fixed on by Washin' Jean for the performance of the marriage ceremony.

The business was a very quiet affair. Jean, with strange taste, had insisted on being "married in her short-goon," so as to be upsides with Corporal Dick in his sodger's claes, as she said. But over and above that she had an arrow of sarcasm hidden in her bow which the gallant old Waterloo man suspected not.

Everything being ready and the minister on the ground, the reverend gentleman said, addressing the old pensioner—

"Will you take this woman to be your wife?"

"Yes, I will," gallantly answered Corporal Dick, standing all the while at strict "attention."

"And will you have this man for your husband?" he next asked Washin' Jean.

"No, I will not!" replied Jean, with quick emphasis.

"And why not?" asked the astonished minister.

"I have tooken a scunner at him!" replied the washerwife, with a contemptuous cast of her head.

Poor Corporal Dick, including the minister, and the half-dozen witnessing friends, were astounded, shocked, flabbergasted.

The minister, however, was quite equal to the occasion. Without a word of comment, he claimed his fee, picked up his hat and hurriedly left the house.

The old soldier was sadly taken down over the business. He expostulated with his stout bride to little apparent purpose. At last she said—

"Only if ye tak' aff yer ridiculous sodger's claes will I consent to be yours."

"Then thou art already mine!" Corporal Dick joyfully exclaimed, rubbing his hands gleefully together. "Off comes the military suit!"

That same night the minister was again requisitioned to

come back and tie the knot, and, true to his agreement, he once more turned up.

This time, to make things sure, the reverend gentleman applied himself to the woman first.

"Are you willing to have this man for your husband ?" he solemnly asked.

"Yes, I am," distinctly answered Washin' Jean this time, smiling gleefully at the thought of her late triumph.

"And are you willing to take this woman for your wife ?" once more asked the minister, glad to have got successfully over the initial difficulty.

"No, I am not," boldly replied the old soldier.

"And why, sir ?" again asked the minister.

"I have taken a scunner at her !" answered Corporal Dick, with an erect head.

On went the Rev. David Gregg's clerical hat once more, and pocketing his fee for the second time, he set off from the house as hurriedly as before.

Washin' Jean, who had thus been paid back with a smart Roland-for-an-Oliver, was furious, and all but drove the tricky old pensioner out of her house with the kitchen poker.

The comic affair got wind in the neighbourhood, and was much and merrily laughed over.

Time heals the deepest wounds, however, and scarce three days had elapsed when the graphic old pair had kissed and 'greed again, like all true lovers worthy of the name.

The minister was once more interviewed, and was at length induced to attend at the house on the succeeding evening, so as to have the delayed marriage-knot firmly and finally tied.

And at this point the humour of the funny incident becomes intensified.

All was once more ready, and the happy pair were all but made one, when the minister once more began with the usual questions, addressed first to the man.

"Are you now willing to take this woman for your wife?"

"Yes, I certainly am," firmly replied the gallant old Waterloo man, standing at the military salute.

"And are you willing to have this man for your husband?" he asked at Washin' Jean.

"Yes, I am," distinctly answered the stout washer wife, with a delicious curtsey, specially rehearsed for the interesting occasion.

"Then I refuse to marry you!" firmly put in the witty old clergyman.

"Why?" cried the pair in chorus.

"Because I have taken a wholesome scunner at both of you!" he quickly answered, and, snatching up his shovel hat, he clapped it on his head and hurried off, with a smile on his reverend face as broad as the Clyde at Dumbarton.

The trio were thus satisfactorily avenged all round, each having paid off the other with a similar Roland-for-an-Oliver cut. Matters thus squared, it seemed but the just dues of everybody interested in the issue to see the perplexing matter satisfactorily adjusted all round, and the comic pair amicably settled in life.

Suffice to say, that before next quarterly pension-day, Washin' Jean and the gallant Corporal Dick were happily made one flesh, and lived to "fa' oot an' 'gree again," like ither happily-married couples, for long and many a day thereafter.

DOON THE WATTER IN THE AULDEN TIMES.

It was in the year 1812 that Henry Bell's puffing little steamboat, the *Comet*, first annihilated time and distance by accomplishing the voyage to Helensburgh in six hours!

Previous to that date the fly-boats ran to Greenock only, reaching that port in ten hours, whence passengers could be

"sailed" to ports further down the coast. The packet boats with goods could, with favourable winds, reach Rothesay, in the Isle of Bute, in about three days; but when adverse winds blew, it sometimes took as many weeks.

For these reasons, "Glesca folks" seldom went farther "doon the watter" in those slow-moving, old-fashioned days than Gourock or Helensburgh, and it was to Helensburgh that David Dinwiddie, an auld Gorbals worthy, and his managing spouse, Mattie, accordingly went on the occasion under notice, by the then elegant and commodious new steamship *Comet!*

The projected "saut watter" jaunt had been long in contemplation, the immediate cause thereof being the condition of Mattie's stomach, which was past mending by medicine, and was much in need of the strong sea-air to renew its lost tone.

At least that's what Mattie told her husband, and most stoutly maintained, too, though there wasn't wanting those who declared, behind back, of course, that it was all a trick of Mattie's, and that she had invented the doctor's recommendation of a jaunt to the coast, so that she might in that way accomplish a long-cherished desire of hers to get "doon the watter" for a week, and so be upsides with some of her upsettin' neighbours who had enjoyed that proud gratification on several occasions, and had made very much of it in the district, having done everything for its publication short of sending round the town bellman with it. However, in whatever way it was brought about—whether by the domestic generalship of Mattie, or by the spoken advice of the doctor—a week's visit to the "saut watter" was duly fixed on and arranged for, the spot selected being Helensburgh and the means of transit the then wonderful little steamboat named the *Comet.*

It was a fearful business for worthy auld David Dinwiddie, the getting the length of the steamboat at the auld Broomielaw.

The three weeks' active and exciting preparation he had gone through up till the eventful date of sailing was nothing compared to the getting along to the Broomielaw with his large small family.

There were no tram-cars in those slow old days. Even omnibuses, now all but superseded, had not then been thought of. As for cabs, they were few in number, and were the exclusive luxury of the gentry. Even supposing a cab had been come-at-able, it would have been very heavily taxed to accommodate David Dinwiddie's family and effects on that "great and eventuous occasion," as Davie grandiloquently phrased it.

"I say, Mattie," Davie remarked to his wife on that eventful morning, "are ye gaun to flit the haill hoose doon the watter ?"

"Div I look like it, *Mister* Dinwiddie, d'ye think !" was Mattie's somewhat tart rejoinder.

"Wonderfu' like it, Mattie. I'm already up to the neck in furniture, no' to speak o' the six or eicht weans still to lift; an' I think ye've packit up everything in the hoose—except, maybe, the cat, an' the eicht-day clock."

"Dinna bother me wi' yer aff-takin' remarks, if *you* please," saucily retorted Mattie; "but pit three or fowr o' the family in the coach an' set aff for the boat at yince, if ye mean to catch it."

The "coach" alluded to was an oblong-shaped box, placed on four low-set iron wheels, and drawn by a long, thin, round iron handle, with a cross-piece at the end to pull by. It had been made to special order by a local joiner who happened to be out of a regular job at the time. It was green-painted over all, and looked a thoroughly successful and blooming article—a sort of rude-shaped antediluvian perambulator, pulled by a long rod, and born considerably before its time.

Davie, to make matters go as smooth as possible under

the extraordinary circumstances, began packing the weans into the coach as neatly as he could, in which he so far succeeded that he was ultimately able to stow away not less than four of them inside of it, with a lot of luggage besides.

"Noo, Mistress Dinwiddie, I'm a' ready for the road," Davie at length ventured to remark.

"Weel, tak' it, then," replied Mattie.

"No' till I see that wonderfu' new bannet o' yours successfully set on yer heid, Mattie. Ye've been sweatin' owre't at the gless there for this last half-hour, an' hang me if ye seem to be able to distinguish the back frae the front o't for feathers. Ye look for a' the world as if ye had jist this moment stepped oot o' a chapter o' auld history."

When our comic-minded hero ventured on this sarcastic cut, he was holding the handle of the weans' coach in his hand, ready for the road.

It was, perhaps, as well.

Mattie, stung to the quick by the unkind cut, made a quick movement in his direction. In an instant, however, Davie had disappeared, leaving his spouse, like the last rose of summer, "blooming alone," unless, indeed, her new bonnet be taken in to account, which was a large and very important blooming fact in addition.

"Here, *Mister* Dinwiddie," she cried after him, coming quickly to the outer door, "tak' *that* alang wi' ye tae (flinging a bundle of tied-up umbrellas after him), an' *that* (a bandbox with Davie's auld lum hat inside), an' *that* (a parcel of worsted, and stocking knittings), an' *that*, an' *that*, an' *that!*" which latter parcels included, according to Davie's idea, every blessed thing inside the house, except, perhaps, the family Bible. What harm the auld family Bible had done that it should be left at home honest Davie was quite unable to discover.

Bewildered to his fair wits' end, Davie surveyed the domestic wreckage lying around him, and began stowing

them away as best he could, putting some in the weans' coach, some in his already well-stuffed pockets, and hanging others over his two arms and round his neck.

At last he picked up the bandbox containing his auld lum hat—the very hat he had been married in many years before.

"Great Abraham!" he said to himself, "surely to goodness the mad woman disna intend me to wear my auld lum hat at the coast? The wee laddies wad pap stanes at me."

Then, going back to the door, he pushed it up, and thrusting his head half-a-yard inside, he said—

"*Mistress* Dinwiddie!"

"Weel, what's wrang noo?"

"Div ye ackwally intend me to wear my auld lum hat doun the watter?"

"An' what for no', *Mister* Dinwiddie?" rejoined Mattie, with a snap.

"Go you to Dumbarton!" retorted Geordie. "Here, see, there it's back to ye in the lump!" flinging the bandbox at her feet. "If ye will tak' it to the coast, wear it yersel'. It'll suit ye fully better than that fancy cockatoo o' a thing ye've been fechtin' wi' at the lookin'-gless for this last stricken hour."

Having thus successfully expirated his last parting shot, our canny hero returned to his extensive family charge, and proceeded at once to take the road by hauling after him the well-packed family coach.

Reaching the street, a group of wee laddies "hurrahed" Davie and his picturesque equipage as he passed by, as a sort of compliment, presumably, to the surpassing variety and extent of his domestic turn-out.

"Faith, an' ye may weel hurrah, laddies," said Davie half aloud; "the like o' this has never happened in history afore, an' never will again, I'm certain. It's a fine thing to be a married man—a most delightful, beautiful, captivating thing, as the wee tailor remarked when the frying-pan gently

collided with the back o' his heid—a fine thing for the circulation o' the bluid, an' the clearin' o' the e'esicht. The man that canna see a lump farrer after marriage than before it, is past the help o' the best pebble specks, by a geyan lang chalk mark."

Looking behind him now and again, Davie descried his worthy spouse toiling hard after, with the remainder of the family by her side, her new hat blooming on her head, and any amount of parcels in her arms.

"Faith," thought Davie to himself, "when the domestic barometer is fa'en doun, 'distance lends enchantment to the view,' as yin o' Scotland's poetical chiels has remarked. I'll push briskly forrit tho', an' get to the Broomielaw first. Yince on board the boat, there'll be nae spare room for argiement, or, at the warst, I can gang doun below to the steward's room an' study the machinery."

Thus resolved, our homely hero dug the point of his boots firmer into the ground and hauled splendidly ahead of his spouse, unmindful of the many curious glances and side laughs which his odd appearance created amongst the passers-by.

Arriving at the Broomielaw, he had just time to adjust his "specks" and read the *Comet* advertisement before his spouse arrived on the scene.

The following is an exact copy of the original advertisement:—

STEAM PASSAGE BOAT,

THE *COMET*.

BETWEEN GLASGOW, GREENOCK, AND HELENSBURGH.

For passengers only.

THE Subscriber having, at much expense, fitted up a handsome vessel to ply upon the River Clyde between Glasgow and Greenock, to sail by power of wind, air, and steam, he intends that the vessel shall leave the Broomielaw on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, about mid-day, or such hour thereafter as may answer from

the state of the tide, and to leave Greenock on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, in the morning, to suit the tide.

The elegance, comfort, safety, and speed of this vessel require only to be proved to meet the approbation of the public; and the proprietor is determined to do everything in his power to merit public encouragement.

The terms at present are fixed at—Four shillings for the best cabin; three shillings for the second.

Beyond these rates, nothing is to be allowed to servants, or to any other person employed about the vessel. HENRY BELL.

August 5th, 1812.

Davie had just replaced his "specks" when the reproving voice of Mattie once more took his ears.

"A fine man you are!—a nice, lovin', considerate husband, atweel! To hurry awa' an' leave yer puir wife to trauchle alang the crooded streets for this length as best she could! That I wasna run owre, or robbit on the road alang here, or openly murdered, is nae credit o' yours."

"An' what aboot me, Mattie? It strikes me wi 'the force o' a flung tattie that I was sailin' in the same boat wi' ye a' alang the road, eh? Talk aboot the cares o' an Empire! What think ye o' a man ha'ein' to tackle a family 'coach' wi' fowr weans packit closely in't, three tied-up umbrellas, aboot six-an'-twenty bundles o' a' things in his twa airms; an', to croon a', a basket o' bread on his heid! Order a special medal to be struck at yince for me, Mattie, if there's a grain o' humanity resident in yer bosom."

Concluding this spirited blow-out, Davie did not await a reply, but hurried aboard the *Comet*, dragging after him his heavy and very responsible family charge, Mattie and the rest of the family bringing up the rear.

In a few minutes thereafter the novel and wonderful little steam-vessel cast off in very impressive deep-sea style, forging its way through the then salmon-haunted, clear, and pellucid stream of Clyde, at the surprising speed of six miles an hour!

Slow as was the *Comet's* progress, however, they were out

of the harbour and all its associations and belongings in a few minutes. For the harbour was then but a very small concern, and there were no stoppages between ports in those days as now, unless when something went wrong with the wonderful little clank-clanking engine which was performing such curious work down below, on which occasions, these occurrences being frequent, the gallant Highland captain would shout aloud—

"All hands on deck, an' spread ta foresheet, whateffer; ta useless steam's off again!"

To which Dougal M'Taggart, the red-headed mate, would reply—

"Hi, ay, sir! Come awa' forrit, Tonalt, an' pring Lauchie, ta wee laddie, alang wi' ye, too, also, to help to spread ta foresheet; for tat funny wee fuff, fuffin' engine is brokit doun wance more. It's no weel this weather, at all. It has brokit doun twice next week, an' three times more the week after, as sure as twa an' fowr's five."

And then, for an hour thereafter on such occasions, the little engines being under brief repair, it was a veritable sea voyage under stiff helm and flapping canvas.

It was all very novel, and in some instances particularly exciting to our homely hero, this wonderful sail "doun the watter." More especially was it so to his worthy spouse, Mattie, who had never been at sea once in her life before, although Davie humorously declared she was deeply "at sea" in Glesca every Monday mornin' to ken what she had made o' the ither half o' the Saturday pey.

Mattie was all eyes and ears for what was transpiring around her, despite the family cares and distractions which surrounded her on board the little steamer, quite as much as at her ain fireside.

She saw some "won'erfu' sichts," as she termed them on the voyage down, and got at least twa heart-rending frichts.

When opposite Port-Glasgow, where an extensive sand-

bank still exists on the north side of the river, which is daily uncovered with the fall of every tide, Mattie descried a *something* floating in the water.

"What's yon, Davie?" she pointedly asked. "Is't a whale, a porpoise, or a crocodile, think ye?"

Davie put on his specks and looked in the direction indicated.

"Tuts, woman!" he sharply made answer, "it's only a buoy floating in the watter."

"Eh, me! a boy? An' ye ca't *only* a boy! It's aye some body's bairn, shairly. For ony sake tell the captain to screw aff his bizz, turn the han'le o' his helm roun', an' stop an' pick up the puir bit callant, that's in sair danger o' droonin'."

"Woman, I tell ye, it's only a floating buoy, an's no a boy ava," Davie retorted, with some warmth.

"Siccan a flat contradiction I never heard a' my born life! It's a boy, an' it's no' a boy! It's weel seen, my fine man, that ye've been doun below drinkin' yer puir wits awa', little as they are at the best. If it's no' a boy, then," she sarcastically added, "it's maybe a lassie, though the need o' a rescue is jist aboot as great the yae way as the ither, I'm thinkin'."

Our canny-minded hero walked farther forward. The ordeal was too much for him. It affected him acutely, even to the length of his veritable stick leg, which on such trying occasions he was in the habit of vigorously digging into the ground, or into whatever was directly underneath him at the moment.

A temporary break-down of the engines, as suggested, actually occurred, and was an unfortunate affair for our party, in the sense that it delayed their arrival at Helensburgh till nearly nightfall, which was no joke indeed, lodgings being still to look for, and the place being strange to both husband and wife.

Entering the spacious bay of Helensburgh, Mattie got her

second "fricht" by a small incident, which in her opinion brought them all within an inch of a watery grave.

The incident happened in this way:—They were within half a mile of a sloping stone quay, which then stretched far out in the shallow water to suit the fall of the tide, and the lights in the houses and shops on the shore road were quite visible, it being now dusk.

A double-masted vessel was lying ahead of them a bit, between them and the quay, and which was burning red and green lights, in accordance with the newly-issued Board of Trade regulations.

The sight of the coloured ship's lights was at that early date in Clyde navigation new and strange to most river sailors, and was very particularly so to Dougal M'Taggart, the first mate of the *Comet*.

Seeing the strange lights burning red and green straight ahead, he quickly concluded that the *Comet* was running ashore, and that the coloured lights ahead were those of some local apothecary's window. So, with warning voice, he shouted aloud to the man at the helm—

"Roun' wi' ta helm, Tonalt, an' haud hard to ta left, or py ta Lord we'll pe run into a doctor's shop in twa or fowr moments!"

"Eh, me!" loudly sighed Mattie, overhearing the mate's alarming order, quickly concluding that her last hour had come; "eh, me! to think that I've ta'en a saut watter voyage to escape the doctor's, and to be wrecked in a doctor's shop after a'! The ekwal o' this never happen't in history afore!"

The helm, however, was hurriedly put round, and the impending collision with the apothecary's window prevented, much to the satisfaction of Mattie, who lost nearly a stone in weight with the sudden fright.

It was an awfu' job getting ashore in the dusk, and a worse job finding adequate lodgings.

The little sea-side township, indeed, was so ill-lit—there being nothing to depend on better than a few small shop windows—that when Mattie at last did fix on lodgings she did so on mere chance more than in any surer and more satisfactory way.

"Weel," cannily remarked Davie, when the family had at length got under a thickly-thatched roof of straw, "we've tookin' lodgin's, it's true; but what's the rale size an' nature o' them we'll no richt ken till daylicht the morn. They're wee enough for yae thing, I can weel see; an' it strikes me there'll be nae spare room here for either argiement or dancin'. It's a mercy I didna bring doun my auld lum hat, as ye stippitly wantit me to dae, Mattie; for hang me if I could ha'e got room for't here, unless by hingin't up by a string frae the rafters, like a winter ham."

"Ah! but I've e'en brocht it doun alang wi' the rest o' the things, my fine man," triumphantly exclaimed Mattie, clapping her hands in joyous excitement, "an' if there's nae room for't elsewhere ye can hing't on yer heid, whaur it should an' *shall* be, if ye're to walk the shore wi' me. A fine thing if a man's best mairrit hat is to lie up an' waste in a paper bandbox an' no' be broucht oot on a special occasion o' this kind! It's a most respectable-lookin' article on a workin'-man's heid—a guid, soncy lum hat. Ye should be prood o' baith it an' me, *Mister* Dinwiddie; for I'm no' by being looked at yet, no' to say admired, though I'm sayin't that maybe shouldna. An' as for the hat, it has been carefully looked after, tae, an' was weel brushed an' blackleaded afore comin' awa' frae Glesca, the which I'll conscientiously maintain, deny't wha likes."

"A lum hat doun the watter!" exclaimed Davie aghast. "Mattie, as sure's ye're there, if ye force that auld hat on me doon here I'll stap it below the first cairt-wheel I meet on the road, though I shood hing for't."

To all which Mattie listened, but said never a word in

reply, knowing very well that the game was ultimately hers, and that the ostracised lum would be finally worn, and, better still, would most certainly be publicly commented on and admired by both natives and coasters.

Things domestic thus roughly arranged for the night, nature craved her dues, and the entire Dinwiddie family having gone to bed, excepting Davie himself, they were all very soon sleeping the deep and sweet sleep of the just.

Perhaps it would be nearer the actual truth to say that the Dinwiddie family were snoring the sleep of the just, for such was most emphatically the case. And such a snoring match Davie's twa lugs never heard before. The fresh sea air of the long voyage had given every one of them an abnormal appetite for sleep, and they were all announcing the fact in happy concert.

"Talk aboot the pleasures o' single life!" said Davie to himself, who had remained up to enjoy what he termed a pellucid smoke, "single life is a' richt enough in its ain way; but if a man wants genuine variety an' sensation let him gang in for the mairrit life. It's simply beautiful, exquisite, delicious, an' heart-inspirin'! My faith, if the weans a' sleep like that wi' a waff o' the sea air, I canna even guess what'll happen when they tak' to the drinkin' o' the saut watter. There's Mattie; *she's* daein' the big bassoon business, an's snorin' awa' there like a fou horse sodjer. It's aboot time I was joinin' her, I'm thinkin', an' helpin' oot the family chorus.

This said, our canny-minded auld friend laid aside his pipe for the night, and was speedily in bed, where in a very short time he added a deep trombone accompaniment to the grand programme of concerted music which was being so vigorously and so melodiously executed by Mattie and her numerous brood of family chickens.

TAMMY GIBB'S LAN' O' HOUSES.

WEE TAMMY GIBB was a sma' grocer, and a still sma'er man. He was, in fact, sae little in bulk, that his wife Jenny had to put on her "specks" when lookin' for him. Tammy, who was gleg enough in the wits, maintained that Jenny's e'esicht was failin' her, an' that she made a handy excuse for the failing by blaming his short stature. Perhaps Tammy was richt, but he was a peace-lovin' man, Wee Tammy, and never pressed the subject.

Now Tammy had been all along a very frugal saving man, and by exercising the most rigid economy in things like himself, as he whiles humorously observed—that is in *sma'* things, he had saved by middle-life several hundred pounds.

He was further assisted in this money-making habit by his wife, who was a very ambitious woman, and who was always scheming and plotting as to what way she could best get her husband to invest the family savings in a bit property, so as to make their hundreds thousands, and then, settle doon, an' live on the interest o' their stane an' lime investment. It looked so well in theory—Jenny's bit o' property scheme—that wee Tammy was mair than half inclined to look after't. An opportunity came about in good time.

They had a relation in the country who was well-stricken in years, and who had a little money, and a bit of property to leave behind him as well.

The old man took ill, on hearing which Jenny Gibb set off for his house, where she nursed him most assiduously to the end, in hopes that she might thereby cut out his other relatives and friends.

"Noo, Jenny," wee Tammy had said to her on the evening she set off for the sick relative's house, "ye'll be kind to

auld Davoc, an' wha kens, the bit property he lairds may come to oor twa sel's, eh ?"

"That's the caird I'm gaun to try an' play," frankly admitted the wife; "but wha's to mak' yer parritch when I'm awa', Tammas ?"

"Oh, I'll jist ca' roon the parritch-spurkle mysel'; ye'll never be missed by me, Jenny."

"What! this to the wife o' yer bosom, after forty years' faithfu' attention to yer wants and wakenesses ? Let me get on my 'specks' till I get anither look o' ye, ye wee sinner."

"Pit by yer 'specks' alang wi' yer temper, on this important occasion, wife, if ye mean us to own auld Davoc's bit property; for his hoose is already fu' o' relatives, I'm tell't, an' there's no' a day to lose," was Tammy's sensible reply.

"That's very true, Tammas, as we baith weel ken; but I'll argue this point wi' you again, my fine man. Never be missed, wad I no? There's a bonnie way to speak o' ony daicent weel-daéin' woman, let alane a forty-year tried and tested wife! H'm! I'll settle this point when I come back."

"Wi' the bit property in yer han', I hope an' trust. Bringin' the richts o' that hame wi' ye, I'll forgie ye for a lot, Jenny."

In the course of the next three weeks the old relative died, and Jenny had managed the matter so well, that she came home with a legal claim to the property in her hand.

Wee Tammy at once rose about five inches in his shoes on receipt of the gratifying news, and after performing a series of queer gymnastics on the floor, he put on the window "brods" of his little shop an hour earlier that night, filled his wife half-fou with hot toddy, kissed her owre an' owre again, as the poet-chaps say, and went to bed that night the happiest man in Scotland.

When the news of wee Tammy Gibb's windfall went

round the neighbourhood, his friends and shop customers, one and all, congratulated himself and his wife on his rare good fortune. To be sure, there was a bit of a bond on the property, he frankly admitted, but that was a small matter.

And now in the possession of the rights to the property, wee Tammy and his wife at once got into a better house, adopted a finer style of living, and altogether began to very noticeably hold up their heads in the most approved fashion.

At length, the rent-day came round, and Tammy and his spouse fairly gloated over the prospect of handling the rent-money.

They expectantly waited the factor's call. No factor came! At the end of three weeks, Tammy said to his wife—

"Jenny, I'll write the factor this very nicht for the hoose rents. There's something surely wrang?"

"I hope the rascal's no awa' to America wi' oor money" was Jenny's answer. "He's worth looking after, an' at yince, too. Get him to mak' oot a statement, an' order him to send us the money for the past half-year's rent by return o' post."

Thus instructed, wee Tammy wrote the factor a long letter in the terms suggested.

A letter came back, very politely written, and containing a statement, but no money.

The following was the main text of the statement:—

Rental received, £314 16s. 6d.; interest on bond *paid out*, £290; taxes, £11 8s. 4d.; repairs, £16 16s. 5d.; factor's commission, £14—*Balance due to the factor*, £17 8s. 3d.

The letter was most engaging in tone, requesting, in the most polite terms, that a cheque for the deficient balance be sent on at Mr. Thomas Gibb's early convenience.

"Hang the man!" cried wee Tammy, when the truth flashed in on his mind. "There's something wrang wi' his heid surely. To think a man wad get a bit property left

him, an' that at the rent-time he wad ha'e to pay out money instead o' drawin't in! It's rank nonsense!"

As for his wife, she was knocked fair speechless at the revelation, and was like to take to her bed over it.

In the way of gleaning information and getting opinions, Tammy took every customer that came about his shop into direct confidence on the subject, who, one and all, expressed the utmost astonishment at this new experience of becoming a house proprietor.

At last, Tammy resolved to gang up and personally see the house-factor at his office in town.

"Is the factor quite wice?" was Jenny's first question to her husband on his return from the factor's office.

"He's as wice for himsel' as twa o' us," answered Tammy, "an' the statement given us is an owre true tale, I find. But there's a good hope for us yet, he says. If the property will only 'let' better this year, then, of course, the balance would be on the right side for us."

This was a sort of forlorn hope, at the worst, if not, indeed, a perfect balm-in-Gilead consolation to the badly disappointed pair. And in their despair they seized on and eagerly clung to it.

The suspense endured by Tammy and his spouse during the next six months was something they had never suffered before. It was past a' conception.

At last, the half-yearly rent-time came round, and following hard on it came the factor's statement.

Worse and worse! Thirty pounds of a deficit this time!

Tammy asked for his razor that he might end himself, while his wife fell clean owre her chair in a deid fent!

"What's to be dune, Jenny?" was the first question which Tammy put to his wife on her resuscitation. "This confounded property-ownership is gaun to prove a sair bit in oor sides, I fear."

"Sell it, Tammas! sell it, afore we're robbit o' oor a', an' are roupit to the vera door."

All right. This did seem a practical and speedy way out of the difficulty.

Next week found the property advertised, in which it was offered as a cheap and most eligible investment.

Disappointment followed even here. Not a single buyer turned up at any price! Tammy was badly cut.

The advertisement was not without an effect, however. At the end of the month Tammy was served with an account for advertising, to the tune of £12 7s. 6d.

Tammy that day repeated his queer gymnastics on the shop floor, to his own temporary relief, and to the lasting amusement of his neighbours.

Worse than even this, Tammy next week got formal notice from the town authorities about a new road being required along one side of his tenement. He had to pay one half, and the road landlord the other half.

Other forty pounds flung away! Tammy got fair mad.

"Talk aboot getting grey heided wi' care," he said to his customers a hundred times a day, "Lord a mercy! if this wark goes on muckle langer, there'll no be a single hair left on my heid o' either yae colour or anither. It's past a' Christian endurance!"

"Weel, Tammas Gibb," his wife would remark as often as the heart-breaking subject was brought up, "if I had only kenned in time what it was to be a hoose proprietor, I wad ha'e let oor auld relative dee or leeve as he liked for a' I wad ha'e dune for him. It's a dear joke, the keeping up o' a lan' o' hooses, as we baith this day ken to oor cost."

"A lan' o' hooses, be hang't!" broke in Tammy. "It's the warst babby to haud that ever I tackl't, an' I've held up a wheen o' them at the christening."

Still there was a hope, if only trade would mend and rents

rise; but trade wouldn't mend at Tammy's wish, and rents went still farther down in consequence.

Next half-year was worse than ever, and puir Tammy had no less than thirty-eight pounds to pay out.

This last pay-out claim was scarcely met when Tammy got formal notice that the principal bondholder would require his money by a certain date.

This was the last straw that broke poor Tammy's back. It cleaned him out completely, and left him a penniless man, with a property on his back that would have been better at the bottom of the sea.

As a last shift to right his sinking affairs, Tammy went into the bankruptcy court, and came out a sadder but a much wiser man.

"And what think ye of house-proprietorship now, Thomas?" asked one of his customers, when he had once more got inside of his shop counter and his window shutters off.

"What think I o't?" repeated Tammy. "Did ever ye hear a man swearing at lairge—that is, up hill an' doon brae?"

"I've heard auld Swearin' Wull o' the hill driving at it wi' engine speed and power," replied the customer.

"Touch me on the hoose-property question, an' Swearin' Wull coodna haud a caun'le to me!" answered Tammy, concluding which, he repeated his former queer gymnastics on the shop floor, with added variations, till the astonished customer thought him fair mad and all wrong in the upper storey.

So, if ever ye're through by auld Ramshorn toon, an' want to see wee Tammy Gibb daein' his queer shop-floor dance, jist ye ask him hoo's business haudin', an' if he's no inclined to retire frae the shop-trade an' invest his money in a bit o' hoose property?

He'll dance then, if ever he did, I can tell ye!

SHIRT WASHING IN A TWOPENNY LODGING-HOUSE.

THAT the one half of the people in this world don't know how the other half live, is what has often been remarked. The difference between life in the fashionable west-end of Glasgow, and life in an east-end twopenny lodging-house, is about as wide as the Atlantic, and at a first glance might be considered almost tragic in some of its severer aspects.

In a certain sense this is only too true. And yet, strange as it appears, Humour, broad-featured and hearty, often sits laughing at the side of Tragedy in such places, as if the lot of the poor ragged lodgers was not a jot less happy than that of the more favoured sons of fortune outside.

It was Sunday morning at Jean Glancey's "tippenny doss," in the Saltmarket of Glasgow, as it was elsewhere in the city.

The morning was a bright and pleasant one for the concluding week of a more than usually wet and stormy February, and the same sun that shone benignly down on the oriel windows of the west-end parlours and palatial roofs of the wealthy of the city, tempting the richly-caged singing birds to burst into song, also glinted cheeringly on the rag-stuffed windows of the wretchedly housed denizens of the lower quarters of the city.

Wherever the sunshine could get at, there was really no mistake about its cheering influence. It brought a wan smile to the face of the ill-clad, ill-fed victim of bronchitis, who saw in it a prophecy of warmer airs, and remission from hacking night-coughs and shivery hours abed. It warmed the pavement flags for the bare-feet of the little arabs of the street, so long bitten by frost and snow. It tempted to song the little linties that sat caged, here and there, on the window sills of the poor, and touched, with the

light of beauty, the budding sprigs which had root in numerous flower pots and boxes along the lines of windows in even the poorest streets. For even the abject poor in many cases love the beautiful; and, thank God, the highest and purest types of beauty and music in the world—the sunshine, the changing colours of the sky, the melody of the song-birds in the summer woods, and the unmatched beauty of the wild flowers of the wayside—are free alike to all.

And the sunshine of this particular Sunday morning was a fact as cheering as it was visibly obvious. It even penetrated the back windows of Jean Glancey's twopenny lodging-house, and lay in silver patches on the floors and turned-up bedding in the different sleeping-rooms.

But beautiful as the morning was in itself, it was *Sunday* morning in Jean Glancey's, and that always spelt washing-day with a number of her ragged lodgers.

Sunday morning seems, at first thought, an out-and-away misappropriation of the domestic wash tub. Very true; but what is a man to do who has only one shirt in the world to wash and nobody to wash it but himself? Take it off and wash it. Exactly. And that's what Jean Glancey's lodgers regularly did of a Sunday morning, about, say, once in the three or four weeks. For Sunday was an idle day with them, and the cleansing process meant soap and hot water, and these necessities were only obtainable through the favour of Bel Macpherson, the strapping cook, and most readily on a Sunday morning, when her own wash-tubs were empty and out of use, and a small bit of soap was for that reason not valued at a premium price.

On the particular Sunday morning under notice, there were some half-dozen of Jean Glancey's lodgers busy washing their shirts.

The most noticeable of the group at first sight was a broken-down semi-genteel looking being, who had remark-

ably fine eyes, and wore his hair long. This person was Gabriel Thinchaffs, a street-ballad seller and poet, who made his own songs, and sung them himself when he could not get other street-ballad singers to buy them and sing them for him. Thinchaffs was a truly ethereal and poetic spirit, being about as thin in face and body as a well-worn George III. sixpence, and looking, physically, not unlike a man whom fate had destined to study cold roast through the intervening glass of a cook-shop window. For although poor Thinchaffs had both pockets and a stomach, as most men have, yet he seldom had anything to put into either of these commodities. But if Gabriel Thinchaffs was poor in world's gear, he was extremely rich in that perennial possession of the poet's volatile breast—hope. His one crippling weakness indeed was that he hoped the impossible, and drank positive nectar from the brilliant delusion. Fame and gold were in the future! That was his living gospel of hope, the one panacea which made light the bitter arrows which a malignant fortune, or rather misfortune, daily lodged in his heart. Without this perennial nectar of hope it is questionable if even Bel Macpherson's strong cookery could have long redeemed Gabriel Thinchaffs from that sad penalty of poetic genius—a too early grave. Thinchaffs, in fact, was a sort of accentuated local Micawber, invariably on the extreme tip-toe of tense expectation, and, by a reverse process of logic, always down-at-heel. As a co-relative of all this, it is scarcely necessary to mention that poor Gabriel Thinchaffs was an habitual lodger at Jean Glancey's tippenny "doss." He was poor, it was true, but did not his splendid poetic genius glorify his humble tripe suppers, and was not his twopenny bed nightly made beautiful by the lights and scents scintillated from the hovering wings of the nine muses of poetry! Gabriel Thinchaffs believed and felt it to be so, and, of course, a man's individual beliefs and feelings are everything—to the individual man.

The next noticeable figure was Whaler Jack, a wrecked sailor, who had lost an arm, and the half of a leg through frost-bite on the desolate coast of Labrador, though in reality he had never been further afloat than Dumbarton. Whaler Jack, however, was a knowing cove, and had a handy way of pulling back his "lost arm" into his vacant shirt-sleeve, and straightening down his doubled-up leg, when his day's begging was over, and he had reached "port" in Jean Glancey's twopenny lodging-house.

A third character of the group was an old blind street fiddler called Rosin-the-Bow, who industriously scraped cat-gut with horse-tail hair all day long for a living. He had nothing of your modern violin solo-player about him, neither in his appearance nor his *airs*. He played simple tunes in simple fashion, and mostly on the first position, with his elbow flung high in the air, and had never heard of the great Paganini, even by name.

The remaining character we shall here notice was Lang Geordie Johnstone, a local speech-crier, whose attenuated body and crane-like neck, elongated to the length of a hen's by crying speeches, agreed but ill with the cold east wind of a raw February morning. The east-wind, in fact, was Lang Geordie's persistent enemy and bubbly-jock. It put a roopie craw in his throat, harled up hard "spits" from his rather narrow chest, and gave him a vari-coloured face, in which *blue* was the predominant colour.

A right picturesque lot they looked as they stood over their wash tubs, these gangrel creatures, the speech-crier's long crane-like neck cracking audibly over the steaming pail, the wrecked sailor hitching up his duck pants every other second, prior to a fresh attack on his striped under garment in the pail before him, the blind fiddler feeling for the soap which another lodger had appropriated for his own use and pocket, and the heavenly-minded poet sneezing out

the rejected steam of the pungent soap-suds as not being exactly the inspiring elixir of poetry.

What accentuated the humour of the situation still further was the fact that each of the three amateur shirt-washers had their ragged coats pinned as closely up to their throats as was possible, for the purpose of hiding their bare chests and keeping out the cold.

"A blooming fine job this is for hus hinderpendant perfessionals," remarked Whaler Jack, hitching up his trousers, and squirting out a long streak of yellow tobacco juice; "it looks hard gales on the weather beam, it does. Bless'd if I don't think I'll back the ship's mainyard, take in a blooming doxy for a wife, and set hup a domestic histablishment of my own. Tea in bed and a clean washed shirt ov a Sunday morning would prove quite hup to Tommy, I reckon; eh, swells?"

"Oh, beautiful dream! most lovely and engaging dream!" exclaimed the romantic poet, involuntarily dropping his half-washed shirt back into the steaming pail. And the next moment he dramatically clasped his hands together and turned up his eyes to the ceiling, as if lost to the world in prayer.

"Hy, hy, there, poet!" exclaimed the speech-crier, rubbing the soap out of his eyes, which the rapt poet, in striking his wet palms together, had unwittingly jerked into them; "if it's Bel, the cook, ye're dreamin' aboot, ye needna throw vitriol into the twa een o' a successful rival. I'm afore ye there, Thinchaffs, in spite o' yer poetry and love valentines. Poetry's a' good enough in its way, but let me warn you, a man can hang himsel' as effectually wi' a rope made o' poetry as wi' yin spun oot o' common hemp. Be advised by me, Gabriel, and tak' oot a city porter's license without loss of time, if ye really mean matrimony."

"Vile pelf again!" sighed the idealistic poet, "the world, and its mean hunger for perishing bread, *will* step in

between the soul and its sublime conception of the beautiful."

"Blow poetry and the beautiful say I," chimed in the wrecked sailor, "tip us a quid o' tobaker, mate, will yez?"

"Conception o' the beautiful!" re-echoed the practical speech-crier, dropping his half-washed shirt into the hot pail in astonishment, "conception o' the beautiful! Hang me up by the twa heels for a bit o' hame-fed mutton if that's no a bricht yin! Whaur's the beauty o' a man washing his yae shirt in a tippenny lodging-house on a Sunday morning, wi' his oot-at-elbows-hand-me-down-coat buttoned up to his shilpit chin; an' his nose an' twa een nippin' wi' saip-suds, an' rinnin' wi' watter like the spoot o' a hillside burn? I can see as faur thro' an inch brod as onybody, but, hang me, Thinchaffs, if I can perceive the spirit o' the beautiful in sic an acute condition o' things as that!"

"Stop, stop!" exclaimed the idealistic poet, "the rich man is not necessarily a happy man. A man may be happy with one shirt only, or even with no shirt at all. There was once on a time a great King,——"

"Hear, hear! now we'll have a yarn," put in the wrecked sailor, hitching up his loose pants in true sailor fashion.

"There was once on a time a great King," resumed the poet, "who fell ill of being too well off and having nothing to do. He summoned his two principal Court physicians, who each saw he was in first-rate bodily health, and was sick only from having nothing to do.

"'What is the matter with me?' demanded the King.

"'You are quite well, I perceive,' replied one of the two Court physicians.

"'Take off his head to-morrow!' was the King's rejoinder.

"The physician was dragged off and thrust into prison.

"'What is the matter with me?' the King next demanded of the second physican.

"'You are very ill, I perceive, but could be made well in

a single hour by getting into the shirt of a really happy man,' answered the physician, who had no wish to share the fate of his companion.

"'Go and fetch me the shirt of a truly happy man, wherever he is to be found,' said the King to his courtiers.

"They searched everywhere among all classes of people for a thoroughly happy man," the poet continued, "and at last, after a long search, they found a poor ragged tinker sitting laughing loudly, and gaily chatting with a companion on the roadside. Here was their chance to get the shirt of an obviously happy man. The King's courtiers approached, and offered the tinker a hundred pieces of gold for his shirt to cure the King's melancholy. The tinker rolled over in broad and hearty laughter when he heard it.

"'Come, come,' said the courtiers, 'will you sell us your shirt? See, there is a hundred pieces of gold for your shirt to cure the King of his melancholy.'

"'Ha-ha-ha!' once more laughed aloud the tinker, 'go back and tell your royal master that the happiest man you met to-day had not a shirt to his back!'

"There you are," triumphantly added the poet; "a man's soul is far above linen shirts, as I have often told you. Poetry and the beautiful go hand in hand, and are a thousand miles above twopenny lodgings and Sunday morning shirt-washings in Jean Glancey's infirmary."

"Blow poetry and the beautiful, mates," once more put in the wrecked sailor, with a shrug of the shoulders, "it's hard seas on the weather bow for the most of huz sailor coves while ploughing life's stormy main; but book me for a chicken-hearted land-lubber if I consent to let the briny 'weeps' flow down my sun-tanned cheeks! Tip us a Christian quid o' tobaker, poet, will yez? The blooming 'locker's hempty here," and the wrecked sailor expressively slapped his trouser pockets.

"I cannot stoop to reason with you," said the poet, once

more resuming his washing operations. "Understand, I am not at all of your kidney; neither are you of my ecstatic temperament. You live in a low servile worldly sphere; I cling to the stars."

"Jean Glancey's," said the speech-crier, "the door to the left; twa stairs up."

"No, no," angrily said the rapt poet, "I am not one of the common herd. I live in a world of imagination, of fancy, of beautiful dreams. In a word, I am a poet, I tell you, and I cling to the stars!"

"Ay, when Bel, the cook, chucks ye owre a fat bane to sook," retorted the speech-crier, "it's then ye're in a world o' really beautiful dreams; it's then ye're clingin' in reality to the beautiful stars; isn't that the case, Thinchaffs?"

"Proceed with your base insinuations, vile man," returned the stung poet somewhat warmly, "I tell you I am above your low biscuit-and-cheese philosophy, as the stars are above the earth," and having thus loftily exercised himself, the romantic poet wrung his shirt as dry as his feeble strength of arm would allow, and then shook it out flat to critically survey its cleansed surface.

"Blow biscuits and cheese, say I!" once more sung out the wrecked sailor; "can't yer dry up yer blooming jaw an' chuck a poor fellow a quid o' tobaker? Sling us a Christian chowe, poet, and, so help me Tommy! you can put down Whaler Jack for 250 copies of yer volume of poems—*when they're printed!* I'm a cove wot likes to hencourage hobscure merit, I does."

That was the proverbial last straw which invariably broke Gabriel Thinchaffs' poetic back. He could stand nonsense fairly well, he always declared, and didn't actively object to "funning," even when the barbed joke was pointed at himself. But to joke him on his prospective *volume of poems,* that was in his eyes the one unpardonable sin, the unkindest cut of all. He had once had dreams of a volume and fame,

poor man. What rhymer that ever kicked six clinking lines together hadn't? The dream of a volume and fame, however, were now long entombed in that insatiable grave of poetic ambition, perished hopes. And Thinchaffs could not stand to be joked on the subject. It cut deep into the flesh of his over-sensitive heart. Therefore, when the "wrecked sailor," who had been clamouring in vain for a Christian quid of tobacco, retaliated by offering to subscribe for 250 copies of his volume of poems—*when printed*—poor Thinchaffs lost his head and his temper together, and picking up his newly-wrung shirt, he shoved his hand inside the pail of soap suds and fished up the small bit of soap he had been using, preparatory to vacating the hostile spot.

"Whaler Jack," he then said, assuming a deeply dramatic tone of voice, "you are a person of low instincts, an individual of prosaic mind and ultramarine habits. I cannot stoop to talk with you; good-by!" And having thus delivered himself, the romantic poet walked off.

"Hy there, poet!" shouted the wrecked sailor, "who are yez calling a horse-marine and a low-minded hindervidual, eh? You've very spryly taken away the soap, I see, and, blow me for a fresh-water marine, if yer don't take yer pail o' suds along with it; down helm on ye, for a mean land-lubber! *there!*" And, suiting the action to the word, with a powerful swish, Whaler Jack threw the liquid contents of the poet's deserted wash-pail slash over its owner's back. "He shipped that sea neatly, I reckon," laughed Whaler Jack, as he saw the poet emerge from the baptism of sapples like Neptune rising with dripping locks from the bed of the ocean.

"Eh, ye thowless gang o' ne'er-do-weels!" sang out Bel Macpherson, the stout cook, dashing in among the shirtless disputants, with dishevelled hair and a wet dish-clout in her hand; "to think ye'd fling yer dirty shirt-washings owre my clean scullery fluir! The like o't's no on

record, here or faur enough! Oot o' my gaet wi' ye, ye shirtless gangrels! To yer beds till yer linen's dry!" and with great vigour and spirit the buxom cook slashed and lashed the disputants right and left till she had effected a summary clearance of the apartment.

The effect was magical. In two seconds the room was emptied of the ragged shirt-washers, who slunk back to bed in the lump, or crowded round the fire-place till such time as the stout cook had wrung out their half-washed shirts, and dried them at the big kitchen fire.

HOW ARCHIE MACGREGOR PAID OUT THE HORSE-COWPER.

ARCHIE MACGREGOR was a Glasgow thriving butcher, and a well-known visitor at the Cattle Market. He was a regular characteristic Celt, with a long memory, and a very unforgiving disposition. On the list of Archie's acquaintances was a horse-cowper named Bob Buchanan. Now the horse-cowper was a fairly good man socially, but he had one rather narrow side to his character, and that was an inordinate love of money, with the determination to have it at all risks. In this respect, Buchanan, it was said, would have sold his own father, if the opportunity of making money out of the transaction had been possible.

A good many years back, Buchanan had sold Archie Macgregor a horse, in the way of business. The purchase turned out little short of a "sell" for Archie. He got by far the worst of the bargain, as he found to his cost, when too late to get the matter rectified.

"That was a rale bad trick o' Bob's," Archie said to himself one day in thinking over the matter, "to sell me a broken-winded spavined auld horse for a brisk young yin. He sell't

mair than the horse on that occasion, as my pocket kens to its cost. But stop awee; I'll maybe sell him as cleverly some day, afore I cast oot wi'm. If no, my name's no Archie Macgregor."

As will be guessed from the tone of his private mind, Archie had a plot of revenge of some indefinite kind stowed secretly away in his big head, which he only waited an opportunity to put into practice against the fraudulent money-grasping horse-cowper.

Everything, they say, comes to those who wait, if they only wait long enough, and Archie's opportunity of revenge turned up at last.

Archie had been aware for some considerable time that the avaricious horse-cowper had been looking out for a wife with some money, his first wife having been dead several years. And in the certain knowledge of this, Archie was able to pay off his well-remembered grudge against the horse-cowper.

Among Archie's shop customers was a cranky old maid, of a semi-genteel type in both dress and manners, who had just come into a certain money legacy. The legacy was small, some of the folks said, but others again magnified it to the large amount of £25,000.

One day shortly after the old maid's legacy had become known to her friends, the horse-cowper stepped jauntily into Archie's shop, and briskly "How-d'ye-do'd" him.

Civilities mutually exchanged, the horse-cowper began, in a sly underhand way, to pump Archie on a matter that lay very close to his mind. For he had heard of the old maid's windfall, and knew that she frequented Archie's shop.

"Man, Archie, that's wonderfu' news I'm hearin' aboot a customer woman o' yours—Miss Maggie Smacker; I suppose ye've heard a' aboot it—an' the particulars?"

"Heard what?" unconcernedly answered Archie, never letting on that he smelt the horse-cowper's motive.

"Dae ye mean to say ye hivna heard o' what everybody roon' here's been speaking o' for three weeks back—Miss Smacker's legacy?"

"Oh, yes," carelessly said Archie, "I've heard sae much aboot it that I've got tired o' the subject; ye see I'm married an' done for already, sae there's nae yise for me botherin' mysel' aboot ony auld maid's legacy, be't muckle or little."

"The amount, Archie,—have ye heard o't?" quickly put in the horse-cowper.

"Twenty-five thousand pounds, they say," frankly answered Archie, slyly watching the effect on the fortune-hunting horse-cowper. The golden bait instantly took, Archie was secretly delighted to see.

"Twenty-five thousand pounds, Archie!" exclaimed the horse-cowper, "man, that's a rare chance for somebody. Mony a man wad marry a modern witch o' Endor for half the amount."

"Ah, but Maggie's a fly yin," put in Archie. "She's no gaun to gie hersel' awa' in marriage to ony man that believes in the full extent o' her legacy, she stoutly declares. The man that seeks her hand in marriage must think muckle o' hersel', an' little o' her money."

"Ay; is that so?" muttered the horse-cowper, half aloud and half to himself. "In ony case, she's worth looking after, Miss Smacker, an' wad prove a boon to a strugglin' man."

After some further off and on remarks, the two parted; the fortune-hunting horse-cowper with a deep laid scheme in his mind, the main object of which was the possession of the auld-maid legatee's money; the other with the determination to have a good laugh, and a bit of hard revenge on the avaricious horse-cowper for the swindle practised on him years before, in the sale of the broken-winded spavined old horse.

Now, the horse-cowper was an unscrupulous go-a-head fellow, who was not inclined to stick at a trifle. So,

having made up his mind on the matter, he at once got an introduction to Miss Smacker, as a suitor for her hand, through the kind help of Archie Macgregor, who, by way of private revenge, was only too glad to put the horse-cowper in her way.

But why was Archie Macgregor so anxious to help forward the horse-cowper's suit?—he who years before had so badly swindled Archie in the sale of a horse. Did Archie know the real amount of Miss Smacker's legacy? Well, perhaps he did? Let the diverting sequel tell.

"This is a bonnie nicht, Miss Smacker," was the horse-cowper's salutation as he entered the legatee's humble apartment as a suitor, for the third time.

The auld-maid legatee frankly admitted it was.

"Yes, a rale bonnie nicht," repeated the horse-cowper, dropping uninvited into the nearest chair, "nearly as bonnie as yer lovely sel', Miss Smacker, no to flatter ye wan wee inch."

Observe, this was said to an auld maid whose scraggy yellow-ochred countenance was past being photographed.

Miss Smacker was secretly delighted at the pretty compliment so artfully paid her by the fortune-hunting horse-cowper. But, is it real? she mentally asked herself, or, has he heard, like the rest, of my modest legacy, which rumour has so largely added to? I'll test him, she concluded within her own mind. So, she said:—

"Mr. Buchanan, you have, of course, heard of my legacy?"

"Oh, yes, my dear Miss Smacker, I have heard a wee bit cheepin' whisper o't," he admitted, "but it gaed in at my richt lug and passed oot o' my left. It's yer bonnie sel' I'm interested in, Miss Smacker, yer bonnie, lovely sel'. My life is a lonely yin like yer ain, I dare say; will ye be mine?"

"Stop! stop! Mr. Buchanan," broke in the auld-maid legatee. "Are ye fully aware o' the extent o' my legacy?"

"No more than the man in the moon, my dear," answered the horse-cowper; "it's yer bonnie sel' I'm interested in."

"Weel, then, I'll let ye ken the exact amount o't, so that ye may look weel afore ye lowp."

Here the avaricious horse-cowper noticeably cocked his ears in spite of his attempts to appear indifferent.

"I've been left a clean twenty-five ——."

"A' richt, my dear Miss Smacker," broke in the horse-cowper, "be't hundreds or thoosands, I'm on the job. Again I ask you—Will ye be mine?"

"But I want to distinctly let ye ken that its only twenty-five ——."

"Nae maitter tho' it was only twenty-five shillin's," again interrupted the fortune-hunter, "I'm on the job, I say; it's yer bonnie, bloomin' sel' I'm wantin', an' once more I ask you—Will ye be mine?"

"Oh, spare my delicate feelin's, if *you* please, Mr. Buchanan," said the auld-maid legatee. "It's no every day in the week that a lonely woman's asked in marriage. I'm awfu' agitated owre this—awfu' agitated: the win' has gotten roon my heart owre't, I feel. I only wish I had a peppermint lozenger the noo."

"Is there a peppermint manufactory near at han'?" questioned the adaptable horse-cowper, being very anxious to make himself agreeable and kind. "Is there a peppermint manufactory aboot, Miss Smacker, I ask? if so, name the spot."

"Oo, never mind; I'll win' owre the bit shock," said the legatee. "But are ye quite sure ye cood tak' me, Mr. Buchanan, puir an' lonely as I am?"

"She's a fly yin," thought the horse-cowper. "She's testin' my sincerity by preachin' up her poverty; but it's a' richt. I'll bring doon my bird in a crack." Then, once more addressing the legatee, he said aloud—"Am I sure I

cood tak' ye, poor as ye are? Of course I am. Hang your twenty-five thous—— that is, your trifling little legacy."

"Twenty-five pounds," put in the legatee.

"She's testin' me hard," thought the horse-cowper; "but I'm wide awake for her little game." Then, once more raising his voice, he said:—"Hang your legacy, Miss Smacker; be't large or small, it's your bonnie sel' I'm after, an' nothing beyond that. Answer me at once, my dear, and put me out of pain—Will ye be mine?"

The auld maid's hand fell into the clasp of the fortune-hunting horse-cowper, and so the matter was settled between them there and then.

A marriage, and, following that, an expensive wedding-trip took place. Everything went as merry as marriage bells should do, till, on returning home from their marriage jaunt, the horse-cowper, having spent all his available cash, gently hinted to his wife to fork out.

"Fork out what?" asked the legatee in surprise.

"Some o' that twenty-five thousand pound legacy that was left ye six weeks since, an' that ye've sae carefully kept dark sae lang. Come, Maggie, we're noo man an' wife; nae mair need for love palavers; in plain language, fork out, for I'm fair on the rocks."

The newly-made wife was astonished beyond measure at the turn things had taken.

"My legacy's a' spent on mysel' in silk gowns, as ye weel ken, sir," she replied in a tone of reproach.

"All spent!" said the husband aghast, the truth beginning to flash in on his mind. "*All* spent, did ye say? Twenty-five thousand all gone on silk dresses? Oh, stuff an' nonsense!"

"Twenty-five pounds only, as I weel warned ye, an' nae thoosands aboot it," said the legatee.

"Show me the papers, woman!"

"They're in the shuttle o' the kist there; ye can examine them an' satisfy yersel' as to the amount."

In less than no time the fortune-hunting horse-cowper was over at the chest, and had disinterred the law papers. It was only too true! The sum left to his wife had been only twenty-five pounds, as she had truthfully stated to him.

"Woman, you have sold me,—swindled me! I have been misled in this matter! I am undone!"

"Undone, are ye? my sang, but this is a fine cairry on six weeks after marriage!" angrily answered the legatee, "after a' yer fine professions o' love, too."

"Oh, hang love an' you both," retorted the sold fortune-hunter.

"What! an' is that a' the consolation I'm to have, after throwing awa' my auld maidship on a common horse-cowper, an' my guid solid twenty-five pound legacy as well? I wonder, sir, what'ill be your next procedure?"

"A divorce—an instant and final divorce," gruffly answered the wroth horse-cowper, "it's the only straight way out of this gross mistake."

"A divorce!" screamed the confounded legatee. "Siccan a fell exposure! I'll tak' to my bed for't first," and at once the legatee began to put her threat into practical execution. In fact, so much was this the case, that it took about two pounds' worth of medicine and no end of doctor's attendance to take her out of bed, once she had got into it, as the horse-cowper afterwards knew to his salt cost.

He was married however, and practically done for, both he and she well knew, seeing which the sold fortune-hunter put the best face he could on the matter, and latterly found Miss Smacker not such a bad wife after all.

As for Archie Macgregor, he had a good broad laugh over the business all along the line, and it was the horse-cowper's belief that he was more than merely instrumental in leading him into the mistake. When they happened to meet on

the street, he could scarcely mistake the grin on Archie's face.

Archie and the horse-cowper seldom speak now, but Archie hears that if you wish to raise the horse-cowper's hair, just ask him in what bank he has invested his wife's twenty-five thousand pound legacy, an' if he's leevin' aff the interest yet?

TAM BROON'S VISIT TO LONDON.

Of a' places in the world for steer an' street traffic that ever ony mortal man saw, London carries the cake.

I gaed up there lately since, an' spent six or eicht days seein' the sichts. I wad hae been a sicht better at hame.

It was aboot nine o'clock in the mornin' when I found mysel' oot o' the train an' standin' on the street wondering what way to turn.

There was a fearfu' crood o' folk poorin' alang baith ways, an' thoosands o' every kind o' twa an' fowr-wheeled vehicles; but everybody and everything seemed in siccan a fell big hurry that I coodna see onybody likely to harken to my questions.

Lookin' aboot me, I saw a Bobby standin' on the middle o' the street regulatin' the traffic, so I watched my chance an' made a race for him.

"Can ye airt me to whaur I cood get a bit chape room tae pit up in for a nicht or twa?" I asks.

Mr. Bobby looked at me yince or twice, an' seemed no to comprehend my question. So I repeated it as plainly as I cood.

But Mr. Bobby only shook his heid, an' went on regulatin' the crooded street-traffic as before.

"Weel then," says I, "if ye canna airt me tae lodgin's, ye cood maybe tell me whaur I cood fa' in wi' a wee shaeblack laddie, as I'm badly wantin' the glaur clautit aff my buits?"

Mr. Bobby looked at me very inquisitively for the third time, an' then he asked—

"Wot part of Germany do *you* come from?"

"Germany, be hang't!" I shouted oot at the tap o' my voice. "Dae ye ackwally tak' me for a sausage-eatin' German? Man, I'm a simple daicent country chappie frae the wast o' Scotland—nae faurrer awa'."

"Call at the Society for the aid hov distressed foreigners," the Bobby snapped. "I 'ave no time to 'elp you now."

There was a bonnie way to trate a stanger, wasn't it? I thocht sae at the time, so my Scotch bluid got up, an' on turning to gang awa' I says—

"Man, ye craw unca croose on yer ain midden-heid; but if I had ye doon bye at auld Bannockburn, I wad tak' the starch oot o' ye in twa ticks, or I'm a Dutchman!"

"Oh, you're a Dutchman, are you? All right; 'ave it all your hon bloomin' way; but I concluded as you wass a German sassenger. Good day!"

I was glad to get awa' frae the rascal, as I didna half relish his aff-takin' remarks, pretendin' that he didna understan' plain Scotch, an' that he thocht I was a German sassenger! Na, na, Mr. Bobby; that cock'll no fecht, shod an' spur it as ye will. I'm a Scotchman born and bred, an' I look it, frae heid tae heel.

Weel, I gangs on a bit faurrer, an' I thocht I wad at yince speir my way to my auld frien', Willie Craig's oyster shop, in Fleet Street.

So I gangs owre to a daicent lookin' citizen this time, wha was standin' on the edge o' the pavement waiting a chance to cut across the street, an' I says to him—

"Am frae the auld toon o' Fenwick, doon bye in Ayrshire, an' I've cam' up to London to see my auld frien' Willie Craig, o' the Fisheries, in Fleet Street. Maybe ye cood airt me there? I spoke twa words to a Bobby doon the street there, but he only codded me, an' let on he thocht I

was a German sassenger. I was near-han' lettin' him hae a daud on the lug wi' my steikit neive for his nonsense."

Weel, the man stood lookin' at me, as if I was some hang't Laplander or ither frae the North Pole, an' never a word spak' he.

Thinks I to mysel', "Waur an' waur; this is a dummy I've forgathered wi' this time. He's worse than Mr. Bobby yet, for he hasna heard a single word I've said."

Wi' that I turned awa' frae him, an' pushed forrit the street as weel's the awfu' crood an' steer wad let me, bangin' against this yin, an' gettin' half ca'd owre by the tither yin, till I thocht the win' wad hae been clean knockit oot o' me a' thegither, stowp an' rowp.

"It's a vera strange thing," thocht I, as I daunnert alang, "that a plain-speakin' Scotch country chiel canna mak' himsel' understuid in London; a vera strange affair, indeed."

Then I began to wonder if I was really in London?

"What," thinks I, "if I'm no in London ava'? Maybe I've tooken the wrang train, an' been whisket like lichtnin' awa' to some ither foreign place? Lord, I'm maybe in France, for a' I ken to the contrary."

Weel, wi' that I got quite nervous, an' begood to jaloose I was in a bad fix. So, up I bangs to the first wice-lookin' man I saw, an' says I—

"If ye please, sir, is this London?"

"London? that's so."

"Then is Willie Craig in?"

"Is Willie Craig in?" repeated the person questioned; "likely enough he is; at least there is room enough for him here, I daresay. Where does your friend burrow?"

"In Fleet Street," I quickly answered, glad to have met a man that understood plain Scotch.

"Oh, Willie Craig of the Fisheries?"

"That's him," I answered.

"A fine chiel, an' a Scotchman, too," answered the stranger.

"I'm a Scotchman myself, and my heart warms to the tartan. Fleet Street lies straight ahead; you'll find the famous Fisheries in one of the oldest buildings in old London, and Willie himself in his shirt-sleeves, and at the back of the counter, most likely."

Now, there was a daicent sensible man. He comprehended my question in a moment. For a rale clever, clear-heided, sensible man, recommend me tae a Scotchman. He's usefu' baith at hame an' abroad, but he's oftener abroad than at hame, as a rule.

But I didna let my countryman gang awa' dry-lippit. Na, na; I aye like daicency, an' a social taste o' the Auld Kirk o' Scotland when meetin' wi' a frien' in a strange place. So, after a bit quate dram atween us, and a short twa-handed crack, we shook han's an' pairted, an' in five minutes thereafter I was safe through the busy Strand, an' forgein' my way up auld Fleet Street. Eh, me, but London's an awfu' place for steer an' street traffic! That I'm back here in Scotland wi' a' my limbs hale an' soond an' firmly haudin' tae me, is a mystery an' a marvel to mysel' this day.

But it was aboot my auld Fenwick frien', Willie Craig, I was speakin'. Weel, in a wonderfu' short time, considerin' what I had to encounter, wi' crooded streets an' strange faces an' mainners, I fand oot Willie's shop, an' got a richt guid frien'ly Scotch welcome, a savoury plate o' stewed eels, an' a kind sitten-doon for the remainder o' my stay.

Willie's daein' rale weel in London, ye'll a' be glad to hear. Man, he's a rare cook. His stewed eels are really grand, an' his oysters are jist perfection. If ye're ever up in London, tak' my compliments wi' ye, an' ca' at Willie's shop in Fleet Street. Ye'll find baith him an' his public table up tae Tommy in a' respects.

But aboot big London. The first day I was there I visited the Tower. It's a truly wonderfu' sicht. Then, I

next got on the tap o' an omnibus an' syne drave, like a lord, tae the Zoological Gardens.

Eh, but yon's a perfeckly wonderfu' exhibition o' birds an' animals. I thocht the lions a grand sicht, but I was mair than merely interested in the monkeys. Siccan auld-fashioned lookin' wee deils o' men folks I never clapp't een on before. As for auld Aunt Sally, the big gorilla, I'll only say this, that if yon's no somebody's grandmither, I'll eat my auld hat richt up, frae rim tae croon. An' siccan a crood o' birds an' animals frae a' pairts an' places o' the kenned world! It was fair prodigious!

"You look amazed a bit, friend?" remarked a bystander to me while sittin' in the gardens. "Wot's the wonder?"

"The wonder's this," says I, "hoo auld Noah ever got a pair o' each o' a' these animals crushed intae his ark, no' to mention the necessary provender. It fair licks cock-fechtin."

Weel, next day I visited St. Paul's, the British Museum', the National Gallery, Westminster Abbey, the inside o' the Hoose o' Commons, an' a lot o' ither famous places besides.

On the third day I had a fine time o't sailing up an' doon the Thames in the penny steamers. It's a wonderfu' big an' busy river the Thames; Irvine Watter canna haud a caunle tae't.

On board yin o' the river steamers I was vera nearly ha'ein' a haud wi' a conceited bit nyaff o' a Cockney.

"Hello, Scottie, what think ye o' London?" he impidently asked me.

"Fully mair than I dae o' you," I as sharply replied.

"Aw! are you going back to Scotland again?" he next asked.

"I hope to guidness I am," says I, "when the like o' you's aboot."

"Well, that is strange—aint it, now?"

"What's strange in that?" I asked.

"Oh, when a Scotchman proper once sees London, as a rule he never once thinks of going back, you know. But

you don't find us Englishmen remaining over a brief fortnight in Scotland,—your country is so very barren and poor."

"That'll dae for you, Mr. Cockney," says I, "if ye come doon wi' me to Scotland, I'll tak' in han' to show ye whaur thirty thoosand o' your countrymen hae been lyin' contented for over 500 years."

"Where's that?" he said.

"Bannockburn," says I.

Faith, I had him on the hip there, an' no mistake! Ye may catch a weasel asleep, if ye gang early enough to its hole, but no Tam Broon; I'm owre weel nicket in the horns by this time to let a Cockney tak' a laugh oot o' me. Oh, ay! trust me for that.

But tae tell o' a' I saw in London wad weary oot yer patience. For it's an awfu' size o' a place, an's fu' o' every kind o' Christian an' unchristian man an' woman on this earth, frae a woolly-heided Caffir to a hooked-nosed German Jew.

An' for spendin' money in! Dinna mention 't! The week I was up there the white sixpences were fleein' oot o' my pooches like fair snawdrift. I had some fourteen shillin's in my pooch on the day I landed in London, and when I started for hame, I declare to guidness, I had nae mair than four shillin's left oot o't a'! So, ye may guess hoo the money was spinnin', an' hoo I was rinnin' the merry rig. Oh, ay! London's an awfu' place for sportin' an' spendin' money in, tak' my honest word for that. I've been thro' the whins mysel', an' can speak o't frae a saut personal experience.

But, if ye want to see the world in miniature gang up to London in the season, as I did, altho' it may cost ye a bit penny o' siller.

An' when ye gang there, dinna fail to ca' on my auld Fenwick frien', Willie Craig, o' the Fleet Street Fisheries. As I was sayin', ye'll find him a true-blue Scot, an' takin' my compliments alang wi' ye, he'll mak' ye as welcome an' as muckle at hame as if ye were sittin' at yer ain fireside,

wi' yer wife on the yae side o' ye, an' yer bowl o' evenin' brose on the ither.

But, mind ye, tak' guid care o' the bawbees when ye gang oot sicht-seein', for sicht-seein' in London is sair, sair on the sixpences, as I this day ken to my cost.

Maybe ye'd like to hear an instance o' this? Aweel, here's a funny yin for ye :—

On the day o' my arrival in the muckle toon, I gaed into a braw-lookin' barber's shop in the centre o' the City, an' sat doon on a fine-cushioned chair that felt as saft as melted butter.

"Your hair shortened, please?" asked yin o' the attendants, jumpin' roon me like a young kangaroo.

"Na, na," says I, "nae need for gettin' *my* hair shortened in the barber's."

"No! How so, may I ask?"

"*I'm a married man*; my wife's twa han's are seldom oot o' my hair. Fegs it's the keepin' on o' what's left that sair bothers me. D'ye twig onything, chappie?"

Weel, the bit barber buddy laughed alang wi' mysel' an' the ithers in the shop, an' they a' began winking tae each ither, an' cuisting side-glances in my direction.

"What then can I do for you, please?" resumed the barber.

"Tak' aff my beard," says I; "my chin's as rough as a stubble field."

"Soap!" said the barber, an' in twa ticks a young shaver had me saipit a' owre, frae lug tae laggan, afore I could get time to draw a breath, or cry Jake Robinson! Man, it was grand. If the brush had been dippit in warm treacle it coodna hae slid mair easily an' saftly roond my chin. In that barber's shop I felt in fair Paradise. There's an airt in shaving. They ken hoo tae pit on the saip in London;— ay, an' the expenses tae! But stop a bit; I'm comin' tae that.

Weel, I was vera highly pleased wi' the operation—it had been so very agreeably an' handsomely dune. My chin was like a fair new chin a' thegither—it was sae smooth, sae

glossy, an' sae even on the surface. I thocht mysel' quite the swell after't. But stop awee; there's nae rale lastin' enjoyment or peace o' mind on this side o' time. I was vera sune plunged, heid an' ears, in a tub o' cauld watter, figuratively speakin'.

"What's tae pay?" I asked, grandiloquently handlin' my purse wi' the twelve or fourteen shillin's in't. "Hoo much is tae pay, I'm askin'?"

"Sixpence," said the barber.

"Sixpence!" I cried, fa'in' back in my chair, as if my windpipe had been nicket by the razor. "Sixpence, say ye?"

"Sixpence—that's the charge," repeated the barber.

"Na, na, my chappie; it'll no dae; the shae disna fit; ye've shaved me yince, I admit" (clawin' my chin) "but ye'll no, wi' my will, shave me twice after that fashion. I never pey mair than a penny for gettin' the beard aff my chin in Scotland. See, there's a penny, an' if ye're no satisfied ye can jist pit on my beard again!"

Wi' that they a' burst oot in laughter, in the midst o' which I pick't up my bannet an' slippit quately an' quickly awa', leavin' the penny on the coonter.

Eh, it's a wonderfu' place London; but, as I said before, it's there ye can spend the bawbees, an' never ken ye're daein't. A sixpence is never safe in yer pooch there when ye're oot sicht-seein', an's faur better left in yer lodgin's till yer return, as I this day ken tae my saut cost!

GEORDIE SHUTTLE UP THE LUM.

In aulden times the practical chimney-sweeper had a more difficult and much more stuffy job in Glasgow, and the west of Scotland generally, than he now has, in the sense that he commonly "soopit the lum" with a handbrush from the

inside by ascending the "lum" from the hearthstane upwards, as a sailor climbs the ship's mast.

Gradually as the city grew, and the old-fashioned tenements gave place to more commodious and fashionable buildings, the "sweep" mounted the roof for it, and with ball-brushes adapted to the change, he cleaned the chimney from the top downwards, as is now invariably the case.

The old practice died hard, however, as most established customs do, and up till a comparatively recent date it was not at all unusual, as the result of a former practice, for the "sweep" to send his sooty apprentice "up the lum," brush in hand, to the height of the first "bend," for the purpose of clearing down the soot which commonly lodged there after the ball-brush had done its work from the roof.

In this connection we have an amusing story to tell of auld Geordie Shuttle and his wife, Mattie, both of whom were sair putten-aboot yae Ne'er-Day morning by an incident connected with the annual "soopin' o' the lum."

"Is the 'sweep' trysted for the morn, Mattie?" asked Geordie, on a certain Hogmanay nicht as the clock was wearing round towards the fateful hour of twelve.

"At eicht o'clock the morn's mornin' he's comin' here," answered Mattie, "when I hope to see the lum get a richt guid soopin' doon."

Mattie's trysted "first-fit" duly came at the back of twelve that nicht, or, rather, next morning, and the worthy domestic pair having immediately thereafter gone to bed for a bit four hours' dover o' sleep, they were at the hour arranged, knocked up by the said "sweep," along wi' his wee black-looking deil o' an apprentice, who was attired in an auld cast-off soldier's coat, and who carried the soot-bag and the brushes liker a born imp of the lower Plutonian regions than anything else one could easily fancy.

Inside the tick of two seconds Mattie, truth to tell, had jumped from the warm embrace o' the blankets to her feet,

and in two seconds more she was followed by Geordie, who took the floor in his cowl, his stockings, and his stick-leg.

Now, there was an awkward bend about half-way up the chimney, which was always a difficult bit to "soop" clean. Mattie therefore warned the "sweep" to see to it that the soot lodgin' in the ben' bit o' the lum was richt soopit oot, or, failing that, "no a fardin o' the fowr pence to be given him would she pay, pollis or no pollis!"

All this was, so far, duly done. The chimney was swept down, and the master-sweep having several other chimneys to attend to, left the wee apprentice-laddie to speel up the vent and finish the job.

All right; so far, so good. But then, it was Ne'er-Day morning, and everybody seemed touched with whisky, including dooce Mattie, honest Geordie himself, and the master-sweep. Even the wee sooty black-a-vised apprentice laddie was quite bung full of curran' bun and ginger cordial, as was to be expected on a Scotch Ne'er-Day mornin'.

"He's as like a wee black-faced hill sheep as ever I saw," remarked Mattie, when the wee laddie "sweep" had disappeared up the chimney. "I only hope he'll come doon safe an' soon an' a' richt."

"Nae fears o' that, Mattie; he's a born deil, that wee sooty chapp—a fair black chip aff the auld block. If he's no a deil's wean, then he maun be direct aff the monkey breed, for a funnier wee-faced, auld fashion't lookin' mannie I never clap't an e'e on; an' as for speilin' a vent, he jist ran up that crookit lum-heid the noo like a squirrel up a tree, or a monkey after a cocoanut. It strikes me vera forcibly that Auld Sooty, the sweep, must ha'e bocht him, or, mair likely, stolen him frae some auld Italian organ-grinder in some backcourt or ither."

"I wish I saw him safe doon," put in Mattie, "for I'm anxious to get the hoose redd-up an' in proper order—for this, ye ken's the New-Year mornin'."

" There's nae fears o' the callan, Mattie ; he's bringin' doon the soot in fine muckle lumps, onyway. An' that's a' we need be concerned aboot. As for the rest o't, he'll be doon here afore twa ticks, never ye fear."

The expressive " twa ticks " here spoken of by Geordie, however, passed away without bringing down the wee sweep's apprentice. They listened, but could hear no sound.

What could be detaining the young imp up the " lum " so long, they wondered. The sound of his brush had fallen quiet all at once, which looked ominous, to say the least of it.

Mattie soon became alarmed at the boy's prolonged absence.

" Eh, sirce the day ! " she sighed, " what if the wee mannie has fa'en sound asleep up the lum ? "

" Stop a wee," said Geordie ; " I'll soon settle that ; a guid lood roar up the lum, or a rattle wi' the poker an' tangs shood wauken him up." But it was all to no purpose.

Various other stratagems to waken the sleeper were tried, none of which, however, proved effectual in the remotest degree. A candle which was lighted and held up the chimney showed nothing ; and a long clothes' pole which was inserted with much difficulty, and pushed about twelve feet up the orifice, brought down nothing better than a loosened bit of brick, and along with that a fresh lot of soot.

" Eh, preserve us a'," once more sighed Mattie, " the laddie's either stuck hard an' fast in the lum, or's soond asleep ; a bonnie pickle to be in on a Ne'er-Day mornin'."

The situation was critical, and called for instant and effective action. Geordie's manly soul rose to the occasion. Yes, stick-leg though he had, he would at once cast off his coat and ascend the chimney in search of the lost laddie-sweep.

No sooner said than done. At once off came Geordie's coat, or rather his sleeved waistcoat, in spite of the warm opposition of his spouse Mattie, who vainly tried to dissuade him from the rash attempt. Having got a cloth tied round

his nose and mouth to keep out the sooty dust, Geordie heroically drew an old worsted night-cowl over his ears and prepared to ascend the chimney.

The next moment Geordie was out of sight, and, thanks to his stick-leg, considerably up the lum.

And thanks were really due to his stick-leg in this particular instance, for by digging the point of it into the side of the chimney next it, Geordie was able to force himself up the perpendicular orifice with wonderful success, in view of his stout podgy build.

For a few minutes Mattie could distinctly hear her worthy and heroic husband warsling his way up the chimney, and that, too, with obvious progress and success, when all at once the scraping, rasping noise ceased, and for some minutes thereafter she heard no sound whatever.

Something had gone wrong.

Half-way up the vent a narrow twist in the build of the chimney occurred, and in trying to wedge himself through this contracted aperture the heroic rescuer had stuck hard and fast.

Here was a terrible dilemma for Mattie. Her guidman stuck in the lum! It was awful to think of it. What but the very blackest misluck could she expect to happen during a year that had begun with such a dire misfortune?

"Geordie, my dear man, are ye there?" she cried up the chimney as loudly as she could.

"I'm here, Mattie, there's no a doot o' that, as I ken to my cost," the husband cried back.

"Come doon this vera minute, an' let the sweep's laddie jist hing there, like a weel-singit sheep's heid, if he'll no wauken. We're no responsible for the deil's bairns; come doon the lum this vera minute, Geordie."

"I canna; I'm stuck hard an' fast here, like a cockle on the rocks," the imprisoned husband cried back.

Mattie's worst fears were now clearly and terribly realised. Her man was stuck fast in the bend o' the lum, and the

former catastrophe was now doubled in the intensest degree.

"Eh, sirce the day," she half sighed and half sobbed out, "what am I to dae ava'—my man up the lum, an' no a grown-up bodie but my lee lane in the hoose? It's the doctor, or the minister that's wanted here; but o' the twa I think I'll fetch the doctor."

Having thus expectorated her grief and alarm, Mattie suddenly threw a small chackit shawl over her head, and prepared to run off for help.

"Mattie," she heard the imprisoned man cry after her, "whaur are ye settin' aff tae?"

"I'm gaun to bring the doctor to ye."

"The doctor, Mattie? the doctor?"

"An' what for no? The measles, the chin-cough, or the chicken-pox are each bad enough, but a man up the lum is a case for even a College professor, no to speak o' a common doctor. Keep quate, an' haud ye there; I'll be back wi' auld Donald Ross, the Calton herbalist, in twa minutes."

This said, Mattie wheeled about and set off for needed help.

It was no joke for poor Geordie Shuttle, his fixture "up the lum," however much it looked like broad laughter on the face of it.

The situation was, indeed, an extremely trying one, apart from its rich and most laughable farce. Had Geordie been able to continue the ascent of the chimney he would have gone on and on, no doubt, till he met daylight at the top of the chimney, and then come down by the hole in the roof, as he had, in fact, vainly tried to do.

But further progress up the chimney seemed impossible, in spite of both his resolution and his stick-leg! On the other hand, a return downwards proved quite as futile every time he freshly attempted it. In fact, so much was this the case that Geordie, poor man, was forced to the conclusion that one of the two alternatives was certain—either the

"lum" was closing in on him, or he (Geordie Shuttle) was fast swelling in his breeks! Dreadful, terrible thought!

Meantime, Mattie had reached auld Donald Ross's door, and explained things as they were.

"Toots, toots!" replied the once famed old herbalist, "it's no ta toctor ta poor man needs; it's ta mason. I cood gie her booels a wrocht weel enough, but it's ta mason-man tat's needed to tak' doon ta hoose an' shoost howk ta poor man oot; you'll teuk goot notiss an' opserve that, my dear woman."

"Tak' doon the hoose!" exclaimed Mattie in astonishment. "Mercy me! will it be necessary to tak' doon a haill twa-storey tenement before my man can be gotten oot the lum? I'll jist rin across an' tell auld Dr. Sawbanes, wha keeps the three big red, green, an' blue-coloured bottles in his window. He'll advise me better, I hope."

Thus resolved, Mattie was soon in the presence of old Dr. Sawbones, who had just opened his shop-door, the morning being yet young, and to whom she addressed herself in the following terms:—

"Come awa' across this minute, doctor, an' see what ye can dae for my man."

"What's the maitter wi' your man, Mrs. Shuttle?"

"I'll leave you to find that out, doctor, as it's fully mair than I can tell. But o' this I'm fell sure: he's in a sair enough fix this moment, an' if ye can bring him safe oot o' his bit trouble, the price o' yer veesit 'll no be grudged by me."

Thus adjured, the worthy Dr. Sawbones took up his hat and stick, and at once left his shop in company with Mattie.

"Has he been long ill?" the doctor asked, as they stepped out.

"Only within this last quarter o' an hour," cautiously answered Mattie, who did not wish to spoil her case, as before, with a too literal explanation of the odd affair.

"An' he's really bad, then?" repeated the doctor.

"There! ye can judge for yersel'," said Mattie, as she flung open the door, and pushed the worthy old medical man in before her.

"Whaur's the patient, Mrs. Shuttle?" questioned the doctor, looking in the empty bed and round the apartment in blank astonishment.

"Up the lum," promptly answered Mattie, "an' if ye can bring him safe doon on the floor-heid I'se no grudge yer fee."

"What! Is he wrang in the heid?" asked the doctor in a cautious undertone.

"He's a' wrang thegither, I fear, doctor, heid an' heels. The fact is, he's stuck hard an' fast in the lum, an' can neither win up nor doon, an' what tae dae, I kenna. Ye see, this is how the thing happen't:——"

Here Mattie entered on a brief statement of what had led up to the accident, to which the worthy old medical listened with great apparent interest, not unmixed with a strong sense of the ludicrous.

The doctor was both amazed and amused, and very naturally guessed the affair to be a Ne'er-Day morning frolic arising out of a too free use of the dram.

"Is this a joke, Mrs. Shuttle?" he asked, "or is Geordie really up the chimney? I fail to see any trace of him in the vent," he added, having suddenly popped his spectacled forehead well under the smoke-board for a sight of the imprisoned man. "In any case," he further said, "I fear I can do nothing for him." And with this, he turned to depart, thinking, doubtless, that this being New-Year's morning the dram had taken the decent woman's head.

"Can ye no gang up the lum a yaird or twa an' lance him?" sincerely put in Mattie. "Ye see he's swalt a bit, an' wants lettin' oot. Gang up the lum, doctor, an' stick the lance intil him. He'll pap doon at yer feet like a shot doo, ye'll see."

At this there was instantly heard an excited fizzlin' up the chimney, which made the worthy auld medical cock his twa ears in astonishment, and presently a voice—the veritable voice of auld Geordie Shuttle—was heard faintly crying doon the lum—

"Od, Mattie, if I was yince safe again on the floor-heid I'd lance ye! Jist let the doctor try that saut trick on me an' he'll smartly answer for manslaughter at the next Circuit Court sittings, if there's ony law left in Scotland. It's auld Pate Barrowman, the mason's man, that's wanted here—he could lowse a brick an' let me nicely doon if ony man cood. Sen' alang for Pate, wi' my compliments, Mattie, if ye'd ever see me in life again."

Old Sawbones, the local apothecary, was amazed. There was now no doubt about the reality of the accident, whether it had originated in frolic or otherwise. A human being was certainly imprisoned in the chimney, and that human being was none other than worthy old Geordie Shuttle, one of the doocest and best known of East-End wabsters.

"It's clearly a case for the mason's man," acceded the homely old medical, putting past his spectacles with great formality.

"Then I'll hae him here in a vera few minutes, if he's in the toon, an's able to balance himsel' on his twa feet; for this, ye're aware, is Ne'er-Day mornin', an' Pate, ye ken, is no jist strict teetotal."

This said, Mattie at once set off for auld Pate Barrowman, the mason's man, with whom she returned in less than five minutes, bringing also along with her the journeyman "sweep," whom she had met outside on the way back.

His sable majesty — *i.e.*, the journeyman sweep, was greatly concerned and amused to learn of the comic mishap, and almost laughed outright when he confessed to Mattie that his apprentice, the wee "lum-climber," was safe out of the vent, and down on the streets half-an-hour ago,

having emerged on the roof, a not uncommon procedure, and afterwards joined him (the master sweep) by getting down the stairhead hatch in the ordinary course.

A consultation was immediately held as to what should be done.

"Will the haill hoose need to be taken doon, Pate?" Mattie promptly asked the mason's man.

"No, the hoose 'ill no exactly need to come doon, but— the man will."

"Unless the doctor lances him that'll never happen, I fear," sighed Mattie.

Poor Geordie heard Mattie's fresh allusion to the doctor's lance with great agitation and alarm.

"If," he cried down the chimney, "if the doctor daurs to approach my posterior quarters wi' an open lance, I'll ca' a hole in his cocoa-nut wi' the pint o' my stick-leg, if I shood openly hing for't at the Jail Square."

At this interesting juncture in stepped Johnny Paste-Brush, a local bill-sticker.

On being apprised of the peculiar nature of the novel accident, the bill-sticker's fine artistic eyes flashed forth obvious excitement. At the same time he attempted to enunciate a long-drawn monosyllabic whistle, which ended unsuccessfully, Johnny being too far gone on the Ne'er-Day mornin' "squeal" to find sufficient wind for it.

"What a subject for an illustrated bill!" he at length exclaimed. "Talk aboot the boo-man below the bed! It's nothing to the adventurous weaver up the lum! It's a new and interesting reading of the cork in the bottle, and I fear we'll have to break the bottle to get the auld cork oot!"

"Eh, me!" once more sighed Mattie, "the haill hoose 'ill need to come doon yet I see!"

"Pit that bill-stickin' rascal oot!" the imprisoned man cried down the chimney as loudly as he could. "He's stark mad."

"Failing the breaking of the bottle," continued the half-

fou bill-sticker, intent to give his old friend and cronie a sufficient Roland for his Oliver, "failing the suggested pulling down of the house, there's only two alternatives left—the 'sweep' must either get on the roof an' punch Geordie doon the lum wi' his heavy lead wecht, or ye maun get a fourpenny battle o' dry hay, Mattie, and kennle a fire wi't below him. If he disna rise up the lum wi' that, he's a tichter fit there than I'm willin' to believe him."

So said the humorous bill-sticker, indulging an excess of humour attributable in part, no doubt, to the potency of the numerous Ne'er-Day drams he had that morning imbibed.

Poor Geordie heard the bill-sticker's ominous words, and groaned aloud in wrath.

At this moment a succession of rasping sounds were heard up the chimney, and it was apparent to all that the imprisoned man was making a renewed and last and desperate effort to extricate himself from the "bend" of the chimney in which he was firmly caught.

In this he presently succeeded, and so suddenly, that he lost hold of the lum sides with his two hands, and came rumbling down to the mouth of the chimney in a sort of confused lump, as black as a real genuine "sweep," and twice as graphic, with dislodged masses of soot and lime sticking all over him.

Just, however, at the very bottom of the lum, from which his legs and a portion of his stout posterior quarters projected, Geordie again stuck fast.

It was only for a few moments, however, for Mattie and the romantic-minded bill-sticker laid each hold of a leg, and with a sudden, vigorous pull together, they successfully dislodged Geordie from the twisted grup o' the lum.

"Whaur's that bill-stickin' heathen that was gaun to set fire to me wi' the battle o' hay?" he wildly asked on once more recovering his feet, making his eyes flash round the

apartment, and suggestively working his sooty fists in fine fighting style.

"He's *gone,* as the article of furniture goes at the auctioneer's last call," rather smartly replied the bill-sticker, making unsteady gyrations in the direction of the door, in view of a speedy *exit.*

"An' you, Mattie!" the incensed husband added, turning a severe eye on his spouse.

"No a word, guidman; no a single word o' angry censure will I hear. I'm heart-glad ye're safe doon the lum withoot the aid o' the doctor's lance; sae much sae that I cood fain tak' ye in my twa loving airms, ye sweet auld doo!" and, suiting the action to the word, Mattie quickly threw her arms round her man's neck and actually kissed the astonished man "owre and owre again," as the lover in the song says.

A burst of hearty laughter followed the amusing act, for Mattie—forgetful, or more likely careless, of sooty consequences—took away on her lips, chin, and nose, a decided coal-gum impression of direct collision with Geordie's soot-smeared phiz.

"Tuts, woman," said Geordie, with a mollified smile, feeling rather pleased at Mattie's loving act; "what a bonnie lookin' phizymahogany ye've gaed an' gi'en yersel'. A fine lookin' countenance to bring in the New-Year wi'! Gang owre an' tak' a keek at your face in the lookin' gless, an' syne tell me what ye think o' yersel'."

"I think a guid deal o' mysel', an' nae thanks to the lookin' gless," replied Mattie; "but muckle as I think o' mysel', I think faur mair o' you, ye auld sweetie!"

"No, no, Mattie; nae mair o' that before folk, if *you* please," said Geordie, drawing away. "This, I believe, is Ne'er-Day mornin', sae hand me owre the bottle an' glass, for there's as muckle stoor an' dry lime in my throat *(a-chee! a-choo!)* as wad effectually manure a ten-acre tattie field."

With right goodwill the bottle an' glass were thereupon handed round the house, and healths were warmly drunk, seasoned with a solid whang o' guid curran' bun, every person in the house—including the "sweep" and the bill-poster—being presently on the best of social terms, and in fine first-class good-humour and cheery spirits.

And a New Year of better luck Geordie Shuttle never experienced in spite of the funny accident "up the lum," as he was often heard to confess. For Mattie had twins that same year, while he himself fell heir to a stockin' purse o' haill twenty pounds through the death o' an eichty-year-auld uncle in Carmunnock, a historic, auld-warld clachan about a couple o' miles south o' the Cathkin Braes, near Glasgow.

SANDY MACDONALD'S FIRST-FOOT.

In a modest little house, situated in one of the quietest streets in the north quarter of Glasgow, lived, many years ago, a family of Macdonalds. The household consisted of old Sandy Macdonald, his worthy wife Janet, and their ae dochter, Kate.

Old Mac was an industrious artisan, who had early left his native hills, and got settled down in the busy metropolis of the West. He was a native of Ballachulish—a small highland hamlet adjoining the great valley of Glencoe.

Besides those mentioned, a couple of friendly lodgers occupied between them the only spare room in the house.

The senior of the two—auld Geordie Jamieson, as he was commonly named—was a working dyer to trade, and a bachelor of well-nigh three-score years. He was simplicity personified, and committed himself in speech at times with an unstudied freedom and innocence which was quite delicious in its way. Geordie was sometimes wise, and

even witty, in his rejoinders, when teased on his mental softness, like so many reputed half-wits.

"Geordie, ye're crackit in the heid," a bench-mate once said to him.

"Maybe that's true," answered Geordie, "but there's whiles a wee bit blinkie o' licht shines thro' the crack."

"If I was to offer ye your choice o' half-a-croon, or half-a-sovereign," said another, "I'm no deid sure if ye'd ken which to tak', Geordie?"

"Weel, in that case," said Geordie, "I wadna be greedy—I'd tak' the wee yin."

The other lodger—Archie Macpherson by name—was a manly young city tradesman, who was supposed by all the guidwives on the stairhead to be "saft" on young Kate.

Archie was a young man of few words, but of deep and solid feeling, and when his betrothed bride fell ill, and took to her bed one foggy November night, complaining of a bad headache and a shiver in her blood, he had a strange misgiving that his dream of matrimonial felicity would never be realised in the person of Kate Macdonald. The sick girl grew hourly worse. The doctor was sent for. He came, looked grave, said little, and went away. Next day he looked in again, shook his head, whispered something in old Janet's ear which brought the tears to her eyes, went away, and did not return.

Next morning the dreaded fever van came whirling almost silently, up the street through the deep-lying snow, and drew up at the "Black Lan' Close." A few minutes after, the ailing girl was put inside and removed to the Infirmary. Archie Macpherson had seen the last of Kate Macdonald.

The disease which had stricken down the poor girl was rife in the city, and the Infirmary wards were full of patients. Inquiries after her condition were of almost daily frequency. Her trouble was progressing favourably they were told, and had taken the "turn." She was recovering; was convales-

cent; when a sudden relapse had set in! A few nights of anxiety to her friends, and Death came and placed its pallid fingers on the tremulous lips, and changed the burning brow to icy marble.

Two days more, and the body, wasted and wan, was taken from the hospital and conveyed to a neighbouring cemetery.

Four long weeks had passed heavily away, and the keen edge was wearing off the family sorrow. It was Hogmanay eve, and the Macdonalds, impelled by old-fashioned custom, sat round the kitchen table, along with Archie Macpherson and his fellow-lodger, Geordie Jamieson, awaiting the dawn of a New Year.

It was a fine, clear, cold, healthful night; the heavens were as blue as the sea, and as full of stars as an astronomer's map. In the street below, riotous voices were now and again heard, contrasting vividly with the muffled silence of the snow-clad pavements. In the centre of the room wherein they sat, stood a deal table scrubbed perfectly white, and bienly covered with the guidwife's New-Year dainties. A very considerable bit of "rale fine auld cheese" rested on a china plate of antique pattern, side by side with a "bing o' aitmeal cakes," all of "oor wife's ain bakin'." Then a second plate groaned under the weight of a whole currant bun, of perfectly Ben Nevis build, with great dark-ribbed ravines on the top of it, and with big boulders of raisins exuding from its scarred sides. Then there was also the indispensable New-Year's-Day "bottle," the seal of which was still unbroken, and which would not be opened until the little round faced wag-at-the-wa', high up in the corner yonder, had sworn to the birth of the New-Year. The little clock, by-the-bye, which was getting to be old, and had become somewhat irregular in its constitutional rambles round its daily orbit, had been set scrupulously correct with town-time "for this night only," so that when the bells in the old Cross steeple publicly proclaimed the birth of the New-Year,

Sandy Macdonald's little round-faced clock would clear its dusty throat and simultaneously tell the inmates of the house a precisely similar tale.

But stay! there you are! Hark! the small round faced clock has become suddenly garrulous. Its little heart is throbbing with excitement, and it is telling everybody in the room, that a bright and hopeful new year has arisen on the ruins of the old.

And see! the whole household have taken to their feet, and are shaking each other by the hand, and wishing for each other heart-warming comforts and every worldly prosperity, while old Janet, the guidwife, is busy with the big bread-knife, making glorious cuttings from the tempting sides of the big curran' bun. Nor is old Sandy behind-hand with the bottle. The seal is broken heartily, and "Lang John" comes tumbling bravely out, and presently rights himself in the gleaming glass with a bead of stars on his brow.

"Noo, I wonder wha'll be oor first-fit?" put in Geordie Jamieson, when the dram had gone round the house.

"Ye needna wonder at that, Geordie," said old Janet; "Uncle Saunders doun by at the street-fit is trysted a fortnicht syne, an' he'll be here by-and-bye. He's been oor lucky first-fit, ye should mind, for I dinna mind hoo lang! Patience! Hoo the win's rising ootside!"

The friends looked at each other, and listened a moment to the soughing of the newly-awakened wind, as it swept round the gable of the old house and slammed the heavy iron gate in the court-yard below.

Old Sandy—whose mind was constitutionally superstitious, and whose feelings were rendered doubly sombre by his recent bereavement—broke in upon the stillness of the moment by relating in his own homely but graphic vernacular, a remarkable incident which he experienced one wild winter night in the loneliest part of the great Valley of Glencoe.

It happened when he was but a lad. He had been doing a job for a sheep farmer on the country side somewhere, and was returning home late o' night by way of the glen. The winds were high; the mists down; and the flooded cataracts of the glen were roaring like forest lions from the magnificent chain of hills. He had reached the deepest part of the great ravine, when a strange phenomenon arose before his eyes. He was thinking of his younger brother who had lately gone to sea, and was breathing a fervent "God help the poor mariner on such a night as this," when a light cloud of mist which seemed resting on the ground, slowly, but surely, took on a human shape, and lo! the face and the form of his brother! but cold, pallid, and lifeless! The illusion was so strong and commanding, that Macdonald rushed forward to touch him, to speak with him, to question him. But ere he had gone a step forward, the spectral illusion resolved itself into mist, and a sudden gust of wind swept it swiftly away up the steep hillsides.

"Ma conscience!" exclaimed Geordie Jamieson, "ye're makin' me a' grue."

"And what aboot the illusion?" interrogated young Archie Macpherson.

"Only this," said old Sandy, "that long after, when I received an intimation of my brother having been drowned at sea, I reckoned up and found that the dates tallied."

"Hand owre a toothfu' o' the whisky, Mrs. Mac; my nerves, I feel, are a' lowsed doon like a buttonless waistcoat," said Geordie Jamieson, drawing his chair nearer the fire. "But hey, lads! here's auld Uncle Saunders at last."

A mysterious "chapp" had indeed come to the door, and Geordie banged up to answer the summons.

The door was flung open, and lo! the pallid wraith of Kate Macdonald stood on the cold stair-head.

With a faint smile of recognition on its wan countenance, the spectral first-foot passed lightly in, and Geordie Jamie-

son, dumbfoundered out of all ordinary rationality, flew down the old wooden stair and exploded his terror and surprise in the ear of Lucky Dow, an old maiden body who kept house on the ground flat of the building.

Now old Lucky, who was afflicted with a sore deafness, noticed not the demonstrative entrance of Geordie Jamieson, as she sat by the weel-happit fire awaiting the entrance of the traditional first-foot. Her astonishment wås therefore all the greater when she turned her head and saw the scared look of her "first-foot."

Extending her ear towards her visitor for a word of explanation, Geordie caught her head between his hands and cried "ben" her lug—

"Kate Macdonald's wraith's on the stair-heid!"

"What, ye're sufferin' frae a sair heid, are ye? So am I," answered deaf old Lucky Dow.

"Kate Macdonald's wraith's on the stair-heid, I'm saying," Geordie cried ben her ear for the second time.

Lucky looked at the speaker dubiously, and making him understand, by a testy shake of the head, that he wasn't understood, she placed her hand behind her ear for a better hearing, and——

"Kate Macdonald's wraith's on the stair-heid!" Geordie shouted for the third time.

"Oo ay," responded Lucky, "it's geyan hard frosty weather atweel, but we canna look for ocht better than frost an' snaw at this time o' the year."

"Kate Macdonald's wraith's on the stair-heid!" Geordie once more shouted at the extreme top of his voice.

"Weel, I'm hauden rale strong, thankee; are ye keepin' ocht weel yersel'?" and honest old Lucky turned mechanically round to honour her first-foot with the usual favours. But she was too late with her kindly offering. Geordie had vanished like a sixpenny telegram!

"Weel, if that's no the driest and funniest first-foot I

ever saw! I've had my fireside first-foot ever since I had a hoose o' my ain, an' I never was sair't that gaet before," and giving her mutch-strings a cynical toss, she resumed her lonely seat by the fire.

Let us follow Geordie Jamieson. Three or four nervous springs and he was back again on the stair-head, and had cautiously stepped within the door.

What a sight presented itself! Archie Macpherson was clasping Katie Macdonald's wraith in his arms, and was covering it with happy kisses.

Kindly old Janet—Kate's loving mother—was fair greetin' with perfect joy. Old Sandy was snapping his thumbs, and energetically whistling out his delighted surprise. But why enlarge? The sequel is easily guessed, and as easily told. Another female patient of like age and similar name had shared the same infirmary ward with Kate Macdonald. The other patient died, and the Macdonalds had buried the wrong woman in mistake. Any probable difference of feature observable in the corpse was set down to the wasting action of the fever, and the return of Kate Macdonald from the infirmary was an overwhelming surprise.

"And so," said old Sandy with beaming eyes, "we have had a 'first-foot' from the other world, an' a lucky one it's been; for it has given me back my dead daughter, and Archie Macpherson his future wife."

THE END.

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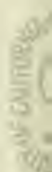

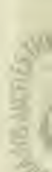

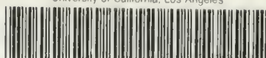
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